

**HUMANIZING THE DOWNSIZING PROCESS:**

**A Review of a Recent Downsizing Process  
in Three Conservation Authorities**

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## ABSTRACT

Most small public organizations lack experience, skills or the knowledge of how to manage the human resource component of a downsizing process. Although downsizing is a stressful process for everyone, there are ways of managing the process that can reduce the stress and make the process more acceptable for the victims and the survivors. This report presents the results of a survey conducted at three Conservation Authorities about their recent experience in a major downsizing process, and compares these findings with the literature on the subject, and with the experiences and opinions of Human Resource Practitioners. In addition, this report includes suggestions on how to manage downsizing in small public sector organizations to reduce the negative impacts of downsizing on the efficiency and productivity of the organization.

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HUMANIZING THE DOWNSIZING PROCESS:  
A REVIEW OF A RECENT DOWNSIZING PROCESS  
IN THREE CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

INTRODUCTION

"There is no good way to downsize a public service agency but there may be ways to manage the process that reduces the impact on the victims and the survivors", Tom Prout (Jan. 1996). The incentive for the selection of this topic comes from work related downsizing processes in 1995 and 1996. Like most local public organizations growth had been the norm and downsizing was a totally new experience requiring new forms of knowledge, skills and thought processes in the work environment. This topic provided the opportunity to compare a real downsizing process with a review of the literature.

Historically, organizational change in the public service sector has been associated with economic growth, technological growth, increased numbers and sizes of organizations, increases in the services provided to the public, and increases in staff numbers. Today the public service is focused on a new organizational change - downsizing. After four decades of constant growth in the public sector, including Conservation Authorities, the reality of limited funds or no additional funding appeared about 1990-1991. But significant reductions in funding came a few years later, in 1994-1995 (eg. Bill 26, November 1995, Omnibus Bill). The size of provincial funding cutbacks to Conservation Authorities in 1996 gave a whole new meaning to the word downsizing. Provincial transfer payments to Conservation Authorities dropped from 55 million to 10 million over a five year period, with the most

significant occurring in 1996 and 1997.

Downsizing, although frequently experienced by the private sector, is a new concept to most public agencies, their staff, managers and politicians. The greater public service sector is unfamiliar with downsizing, has had limited time to become familiar with the process and potentially lacks the skills to manage the process. This exploratory research project is intended to look at a specific public sector agency, conservation authorities, that recently experienced a significant downsizing process. The feelings and perceptions of the board members and staff will be recorded and compared to published research on downsizing. The survey results, along with the reference material, have been used to develop an overview of suggested management practices that could improve the downsizing processes for the victims, survivors, and board members (the politicians). It is noteworthy that the literature was silent with regards to board members, politicians and policy makers.

#### CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES - BACKGROUND

Ontario's Conservation Authorities Act was enacted in 1946. Thirty-eight conservation authorities were created based on three key and unique principles: local initiative; cost sharing; and the watershed as the unit of management. A change to the second principle caused the current downsizing issue. The province used its power to arbitrarily and significantly modify a 50 year cost sharing agreement. This was accomplished in two ways: major reductions in transfer payments and major changes in what the transfer payments could be used for. The provincial government has traditionally provided substantial funding to

conservation authorities: even in 1995 the Province was still one of the main sources of funding for these special purpose bodies. By 1996, the major source of funding for conservation authorities shifted from provincial transfer payments to revenues from services (user fees) and municipal levies. Total provincial funding to conservation authorities peaked in 1990 at over \$50 million. In 1996 provincial funding was reduced to \$17 million, \$10 million in 1997 and projected to be zero by 1998.

Conservation Authorities are local service delivery agencies with a Board of Directors appointed by the participating municipalities, with Provincially appointed representatives up to 1995. However, along with the reductions in funding the province eliminated its appointments to the Board of Directors. Responsibility for setting and changing policies, programs and budgets rests with the Board of Directors, the politicians. These men and women, along with input from senior staff, had to decide how to adjust the operations of their respective conservation authority to compensate for the massive reductions in provincial funding. This responsibility included determining which staff positions would be eliminated. Therefore, it may be reasonable to assume that Board Members may experience feelings similar to staff during a downsizing process. On the other hand, Board Members may not experience the same feelings because of their absence from the day to day stress of the workplace.

The Ausable Bayfield, Saugeen Valley and Upper Thames River Conservation Authorities participated in the survey. These three conservation authorities handled the downsizing

process in a similar, but not identical, manner. Initially attrition was used to balance Provincial funding reductions. As the reductions in funding continued and increased in magnitude, some contract staff and a few permanent staff were terminated. In 1996, additional full time permanent staff had to be laid off. Total layoffs over a four year period varied from 20% to 65% depending on staff numbers in the Conservation Authority before the process started. The Conservation Authorities surveyed were all non unionized. Layoffs were not based on seniority and performance but on the organization's service delivery projects. The staff who were retained were considered to be those who best fit the projected service delivery needs of the organization. Where more than one person had the skills, then seniority became a factor in the decision.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project is to record and examine the perceptions and feelings of board members and staff who have experienced a downsizing exercise and to recommend management options that may reduce negative feelings and permit the agency to continue providing services in an efficient and effective manner.

The objectives of this research project are:

1. To determine methods that could be used in downsizing processes to appropriately recognize the feelings and needs of decision makers, terminated staff and retained staff members.
2. To determine the importance of severance packages to the victims and the survivors of a

downsizing process.

3. To determine the types of skills that could assist decision makers and staff members to better handle the downsizing process.
4. To determine if board members have similar feelings and perceptions to those of staff in a downsizing exercise.
5. To determine if there are negative and/or positive feelings or perceptions about the downsizing process.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OR VALUE OF THE RESEARCH TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Conservation Authority management options to the massive funding reductions were limited by the short time frame between the notice of funding reductions and implementation, as well as an overall lack of knowledge of how to deal with major decreases in funding. Conservation Authorities' budgets are based on a calendar year. The notice came in November of 1995, leaving little time before implementation on January 1, 1996. Staff reductions were inevitable and consequently are the focus of this report; however this paper will also consider management options other than staff reductions.

It is important to note that for an organization to be in a good position to handle a downsizing process it needs to start well in advance. Small public bodies may not have sufficient lead time if they wait for the announcement that amalgamations or downsizing decisions have been made. The time to start is now.

Change during downsizing is different from change associated with growth. Kanter (1979:71) explains that "managing economic decline is quite different from managing growth". Curtis (1989:675) outlines the environment of downsizing: "Organizations or their units under cutbacks often resemble "flotational" particles between impacting systems". The knowledge base and the skill levels of policy-makers, managers and staff on how to manage organizational change and downsizing processes are limited: our experiences are with growth, not decline. The potential to increase our knowledge about the subject is one potential benefit that this research may provide to local government.

Four additional benefits that relate to management processes may be provided by this research. They are outlined by Charles Levine (1980:305-307). The first deals with morale and job satisfaction: "organizational contraction produces serious morale and job satisfaction problems". The reality of this point is supported by Noer (1993:5,6), who indicates that "survivor syndrome" can include fear, anger, depression, anxiety, mistrust and changes in behaviour. Given these potential employee reactions, the process of downsizing could have drastic effects on an organization's efficiency and productivity. Proper management of the process may reduce the feelings and the impact on the organization.

Next there is the "The Paradox of Irreducible Wholes" which suggests that an organization cannot be reduced one piece at a time by reversing the sequence by which the organization was built. Organizations are systems that assembled expertise, political support, facilities and equipment during the growth process. Reversing the growth process to deal with austerity can result in a cut or the elimination of one part that may result in an unanticipated problem

in another part because of the interconnectedness of the organization's system and culture. An organization cannot afford unanticipated problems with survivors and service delivery.

Third, there is the "Tooth Fairy Syndrome" of denial: often board members and staff are unwilling to accept cutbacks as real and/or permanent. This syndrome is cited by Duck (1993:111), who notes that people may have to hear a message over and over before they will believe it to be true. Knowing how to manage the early stages of downsizing is important to the outcome of the process. Based on the survey results, this problem was limited to a small number of individuals. However, a review of the current municipal discussions about amalgamations showed that there are still staff and politicians who demonstrate the Tooth Fairy Syndrome.

The last consideration suggested by Levine (1980), and possibly one of the most significant in terms of those who remain in the organization, addresses the impact of unclear directions on survivors of downsizing: the "Mandates Without Money Dilemma". Catherine Burr, in a presentation (March 28, 1996), emphasised this concept by noting that during downsizing, public organizational mandates may not be clear and the roles of the individual staff members may be blurred because it takes time to determine what the mandates and roles are going to be in the new organization. Vague goals and objectives, unclear roles and responsibilities of the individuals and the groups in the organization prevail, while the policy-makers determine what services will be continued and what services will be dropped.

With its announcement of the disentanglement exercise, referred to as “Megaweek” (January 13-17, 1997), the Harris Government initiated a paradigm shift in the fabric, the nature, the look and the operations of municipal government in Ontario. According to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing the purposes of municipal reform are to “(a) act on the provincial government’s commitment to introduce a new Municipal Act that would be the corner stone of a new relationship between municipalities and the province; and (b) give municipalities broader authority to manage their own affairs in the best interests of Ontario taxpayers,” (Stobo, 1997).

The potential fundamental changes falling out of the megaweek announcements have attracted comments, suggestions and advice from politicians, academics, practitioners, administrators and the public. Debates abound over the potential for government to become more effective, more accountable, more efficient, more autonomous, more flexible, more understandable, more streamlined and at the same time, less expensive. Other debates are centred around whether communities will lose their identity with the amalgamation of municipalities. Proponents of amalgamation argue that communities will always be communities because their boundaries often don’t coincide with municipal boundaries and are not determined on the basis of service delivery. The mayor of Mitchell, Hugh McCaughey, sees municipal boundaries as the delineation of geographical units that will permit the efficient delivery of services: “the people don’t care who provides the services as long as the services are provided”. Communities, on the other hand will survive based on such entities as culture, schools, recreation, and religion.

In all of the confusion over the best way to deliver services and what the New Ontario should look like, two things are certain. First, the human resources component of government is going to be affected in a way it has never been affected before. Secondly, most municipalities and public organizations don't have the experience, skill or knowledge base to manage the human resource component in a downsizing, restructuring, amalgamating, and chaotic state. Managing the human resource component is critical to the efficiency, effectiveness, and overall success of the new municipal structure. In fact, management of human resources may be the most important factor in all of the ongoing debates about change, including the controversies about "bigger is better" and "privatization will save money". Unfortunately, the importance of managing people is absent from the debates in the literature and the minds of most politicians, managers and academics. The success of any organization may not depend on how big or small, or how private or public the delivery mechanism is: perhaps its success will be determined by the quality of the political and administrative leaders and their attention to the people in their organizations.

The outcome of the downsizing process is what is most important. Will the board members and the survivors be able to deliver policies and programs in an efficient, effective and productive manner? Will those who have been terminated be able to find new careers? Will the survivors be able to cope with the new organizational structure and culture? Dealing with downsizing is a new management paradigm in organizational change. According to Duck (1993:113), "change is fundamentally about feelings", and dealing with emotions is essential to the new management paradigm. "Managing people is managing feelings" (Duck,

1993:113). Feelings are affected by perceptions. According to Robbins (1988:18) "perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment." Individuals and groups may perceive the same events differently, as a result of how they are affected by those events, as well as a variety of other factors. In a downsizing process, people will have negative and, possibly, positive feelings and perceptions, and it is important that local government managers know how to respond. How local government handles the fact that staff, and possibly Board Members, perceive the same thing differently can contribute to the success or failure of a downsizing process.

The need to manage an organization's human resources in a downsizing process is clear from Ken Mark's view of downsizing: " Downsizing is a dismal exercise. It hurts everyone involved. And it tends to suck out the energy and spirit in every workplace it touches. Add to that overstressed and overworked managers and you have a recipe for disaster," (Mark, 1996-97:14). This research will hopefully provide information and/or solutions that will assist local governments in dealing with downsizing issues, thus enabling them to have a positive impact on the outcomes of the process.

## METHODOLOGY

### **Research Design**

The design of this research is an exploratory, pragmatic, quantitative and qualitative process evaluation, but the design is limited by the facts that it was not possible to use a control group or measurements of variables before and after the downsizing intervention. The design is

formative in that it should provide practitioners and academics with additional knowledge about the perceptions and feelings of three stakeholder groups: board members, terminated staff, and retained staff. Gender responses have also been recorded. The inclusion of board members in the research should provide information about a critical aspect of downsizing that is absent in the literature. As policy makers, do board members share the same feelings and perceptions as staff? It is anticipated that the research may provide information suggesting that policy makers are, in fact, subject to similar feelings as those of victims and survivors.

The conservation authorities (CAs) being studied are all non-unionized agencies, 40 to 50 years old, and are public service special purpose bodies with locally appointed boards of directors. Prior to downsizing the CAs sampled had staff sizes in the range of 25-60 and Boards of Directors in the range of 16-24. The Ausable Bayfield and Saugeen Valley Conservation Authorities are rural watershed units while the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority has a mixture of rural and urban influences. The policy makers on the Boards of Directors are a mixture of elected and non-elected representatives with backgrounds in a variety of businesses such as agriculture and retailing. Their academic levels varied, ranging from some secondary education to post graduate education.

A survey was developed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee. Forty-three Board Members and 83 staff in three conservation authorities received the survey which contained a covering letter of introduction and explanation. As well, the participants were asked to complete a research study consent form. Participants were given the option of not completing

the survey or of completing the survey with the option of not answering some questions. The surveys were returned by mail and kept confidential.

### **Stakeholders**

The stakeholders in a downsizing exercise of conservation authorities include: decision makers/board members; terminated staff; retained staff; family members; municipal staff; local politicians; provincial government agencies; members of provincial parliament; and clients (private landowners who receive services). Only the first three stakeholder groups have been included in this research project. The decision to limit the research to these three groups was made during the research design process and development of the goal and objectives. Five factors contributed to this decision: available time; limited financial resources; the direct effect of management's decisions about downsizing on these three groups; the availability or potential of collecting information from the various groups; and the timing of the questionnaire relative to the downsizing exercise. The feelings of the target groups would be the strongest immediately following the downsizing process. Consequently the survey needed to be delivered sooner rather than later so that the survey results were a true indication of the impact that the downsizing process had on the feelings of the target groups. It is worth noting that the literature did not speak directly to the issue of how the survey responses would be affected as the time after downsizing increased. The research was designed to conduct the survey as close to the time of downsizing as possible. The most significant portion of the staff layoffs took place in late 1995 and early 1996 and the survey was delivered in May of 1996.

The analysis also looks at variations in responses based on the respondent's status, ie.: board member; terminated staff; retained staff; board members involved in the decision/recommendation process; staff who were involved in the decision/recommendation process; age; gender; years of service; and education.

### **Pretest**

The questionnaire was pretested on the 1996 MPA Organizational Behaviour Class, 904b, as well as on a group with lower overall education. The pretest proved to be very worthwhile. Several good suggestions were obtained from both groups which should increase the participants overall understanding of the questions. If the participant can understand the questions, the results should be more valid.

### **The Questionnaire**

What is being measured?

1. The difference in feelings between staff members who lost jobs and staff members retained.
2. The difference in feelings between board members and staff.
3. The difference in gender response to downsizing.
4. The difference in age response to downsizing.
5. The duration over which feelings lasted.
6. The importance of severance packages to victims and survivors.
7. The types of skills that would have helped the three stakeholder groups cope with the downsizing process.

8. The perceived positive aspects of downsizing.

9. The perceived negative aspects of downsizing.

The survey consisted of 28 questions, and was designed to obtain the feelings, needs, experiences and expectations of board members and staff. The Department of Political Science Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved of the survey. The survey was subsequently delivered to three conservation authorities. The voluntary and confidential nature of the survey was made clear through the use of a covering letter and a consent form. In total, the survey was delivered to 126 people, 43 board members and 83 staff, in three conservation authorities. As 56 questionnaires were returned the overall response rate was 45 %, which is sufficient to provide reliable results.

This research was designed as exploratory, without hypotheses or complicated statistical analysis. Survey results have been compared with what the literature review suggests are expected or anticipated responses to downsizing. Management options have also been reviewed and provide possible explanations for certain survey results. A list of management options that could improve the human resources aspect of a downsizing process have also been included in the summary and recommendations.

### **Data Analysis**

The questionnaire was designed as exploratory and not for detailed regression analysis. Detailed analysis of the data is limited by the small sample size and the voluntary nature of the survey which results in incomplete questionnaires. This limitation was confirmed through

discussions with Professor Robert Young. Tables, percentages, and bar graphs have been used to present the data in a manner useful for the purposes of this study.

### LIMITATIONS TO THE RESEARCH

The research has the following limitations. The survey was voluntary in that members of the study group could decline to answer the survey. As well, participants who agreed to complete the survey could decline to answer a particular question (s). Although the responses should reflect the true feelings of the participants the data base is not complete for any or all questions. This incompleteness makes it difficult to carry out statistical analysis on the data. A response rate of 45 % is good but the sample size, especially for board members, may be too small to do more than suggest possible trends. Although the survey was designed to minimize ambiguity, the participants may have interpreted the survey questions differently than the researcher intended.

### DEFINITIONS

A glossary is located in the appendix as a means of providing clarification of the terms used in this report. These definitions may or may not conform exactly to the definitions used by other practitioners and academics.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The appendix contains a complete list of the publications reviewed. The following concepts discussed in the literature are considered to be the most relevant to this paper.

### **Downsizing**

It is difficult to find definitions of downsizing in the literature. Words used in the literature and by practitioners include building-down, declining, dismantling, ratcheting-down, rebalancing, redirecting, reorganizing, compressing, de-hiring, streamlining, resizing, rightsizing, derecruiting, retrenchment, cutbacks, organizational contraction, structural change, decline, reduction and transition. Charles Levine (1980:305) speaks of cutbacks as "managing organizational change toward lower levels of resource consumption and organizational activity". All of these words have similar meanings to downsizing and they also have unique connotations. More important than the words are the attributes of downsizing. Kim Cameron (1994), suggests four major attributes: intent, personnel, efficiency and work processes. Downsizing is intentional, it usually involves reductions in staff, it can be focused on improving efficiency, and the work process changes because fewer people end up with more work. All of these attributes relate to this research: the downsizing process was an intentional response to reduce costs; the process included substantial reductions in contract and permanent staff; the survivors had more work to do while senior management and the Board of Directors decided what services to continue delivering, which ones to drop and what new services might be added; staff need time to adjust to the changing culture of the organization; and some consideration was given to the potential to improve the efficiency of the organizations.

The literature did not specifically deal with downsizing that resulted in the termination of highly qualified staff whose positions were terminated through no fault of their own, although there was some reference to the fact that staff may leave voluntarily if the new work environment doesn't meet their needs. This happened and one specific case has been documented. A female in a professional position left eleven months following the January, 1996 notices of termination. Her decision to leave included the following reasons: didn't agree with who was terminated and who was retained; changes to her position; didn't share the same vision as the Board of Directors and other survivors; not satisfied with the quality of her work; increased work load; and it would open up opportunities for both her and for the organization.

### **Survivors and Survivor Sickness**

Noer (1993:5-6), suggests that those who remain in an organization often have feelings similar to the victims of downsizing. Survivors become fearful, angry, depressed, devoid of spontaneity, anxious, mistrusting and experience changes in behaviour. Recognizing and dealing with layoff survivor sickness is essential and necessary before the employer can deal with the issue of staff motivation which directly affects an organizations' effectiveness and efficiency. A process of downsizing to achieve increased efficiency and productivity could, in fact, produce the opposite results.

The changes in the employer/employee working relationship as a result of downsizing can be significant and is illustrated by the concept of old and new employment contracts. The old

employment contract focused around the psychological contract that implied that employees who performed satisfactorily and fit the culture of the organization will have job security until they retire (Noer, pp.13). The new employment contract focuses on loyalty to the individual and the team and away from loyalty to the organization. It is important that employers and employees are working under the same working relationship. This new workplace environment happens when the employer and the employees develop a new attitude towards responsibility for performance, an attitude which requires the individual to take responsibility for their own performance, progress and future (Noer 1993:28). . This type of shift in attitude would bring about a whole new meaning to leadership and motivation for managers of public sector organizations during and after downsizing processes.

Noer also suggests that the symptoms of layoff survivor sickness can last for long periods of time and cannot be solved by short-term motivational techniques. There must be an emotional release, catharsis and a grieving process before the individual and the organization can move ahead (Noer, 1993:34). The transition to the new paradigm will be difficult because there have been generations of employees that have experienced job security under the old contract. Survivors will have strong needs to be treated fairly, fed a frequent diet of information that is honest and believable, treated with respect and not made to feel guilty by employers or supervisors who tell them they should be glad to have a job. Staff who are retained want to know why they were kept. Managers need to keep information as specific as possible, provide opportunities for the release of emotions, encourage a catharsis and grieving process, help employees break the chain of organizational codependency, shift them

to team codependency, and help them recapture a sense of control and self-esteem.

The motivation to break codependency and move towards personal empowerment lies somewhere in the need of individuals to control their destiny. Individuals who attempt to hold on to the old employment contract and the old culture are organizationally dependent and let the organization control their lives, self-esteem and sense of worth. By breaking the dependency individuals learn to trust their own perceptions. The statement "Don't place your Spiritual Currency in the Organizational Vault" (Noer, 1993:151), clearly expresses Noer's interest in the new contract scenario.

Under the conditions of the new contract good performance is rewarded with acknowledgement of relevance. Motivation comes from the opportunity to do good work in an enriched participative environment. To achieve these new employment relationships, managers will need to coach, facilitate, and empower individuals and at the same time stop holding the employee's hand. In my opinion, the new paradigm will require new forms of leadership competency.

### **Survivor Feelings**

"Losing a job is the third most stressful life event, surpassed only by the death of a spouse and divorce." (Allen, 1990:83). Victims and survivors may have feelings of fear, denial, anger, shock, confusion, depression and elation. Letting employees go can also be as wrenching for the managers doing the terminating as for the individuals being terminated. For staff members

that have not experienced the death of a spouse or divorce, termination could be the most stressful experience in their lives.

Survivors may have different feelings depending on the procedure used to decide who the victims will be. Some survivors may be pleased that the “dead wood” has been eliminated. Other survivors may have feelings of guilt, anger, relief and anxiety that related to job security (Gutknecht, 1993:27 ).

Why the guilt feelings (Brockner, 1986:374-375)? Remorse or survivor guilt can be explained by the Equity Theory. Survivors may experience a state of positive inequity as a result of co-worker layoffs. Positive inequity is the perception by a survivor that their outcome to input ratio is greater than those who were terminated, especially when the layoffs were because of funding cutbacks and through no fault of the individuals who were terminated. Positive inequity may be a significant explanation to survivor guilt in downsizing that is not based in a union environment, and where the decision about who goes is not necessarily based on seniority and past productivity but on what the individual can bring to the new organization.

Brockner (et al.,1987:527) suggests that survivors of downsizing will react negatively when they identify with layoff victims who were perceived to have been inadequately compensated. He observed that the negative reaction was in the form of reduced work performance and lower organizational commitment. These observations are explained by the Justice Theory, which proposes ways in which individuals react to victims of injustice: “those who observe

unfair treatment being meted out to others should distance themselves or withdraw from the agent of the unfair treatment” (Brockner et al., 1987:533). In this study the agent could be the organization, the CAO, a manager, or a supervisor.

No individual, or group of people is immune to change-induced anxiety (Merry, 1994:37). Merry and Singer in their article “Healing the Healers”, looked at the medical field. “Working Scared” is the term they used to describe employees’ high anxiety levels caused by downsizing - anxiety over job security. In addition to anxiety, Merry and Singer suggest feelings of denial, confusion, depression and anger.

#### **Implementing Downsizing: How to do it.**

Kim Cameron suggests three different downsizing strategies: workforce reduction; work redesign; systemic (Cameron, 1994:197). The first is focused mainly on the reduction of employees; the second involves reducing the work load as well as the number of workers; the systemic strategy involves changing the organization’s culture, and the attitudes and values of employees. “Systemic strategies involve redefining downsizing as a way of life, as an ongoing process, as a basis for continuous improvement, rather than as a program or target” (Cameron, 1994:198-99). Systemic strategies are long-term and may not be options for conservation authorities, given the relatively short notice of significant funding reductions. Most conservation authorities have completed their downsizing exercises and should consider implementing systemic strategies as part of their recovery process if they have not already done so.

Cameron (1994:201), suggests that gradual reductions in staff and a slow downsizing process is associated with increases in performance. Cameron didn't define what "gradual" means in terms of duration. Other research and comments from human resource practitioners are contrary to Cameron's views and suggest that a quick process may be more beneficial. Some of the human resource reasons for a fast downsizing process include a shorter period of unpleasantness, a reduction in the period of uncertainty related to who stays and who goes, the removal of uncertainty related to ongoing downsizing and whose job is next, and a chance for the healing process to start sooner. The conservation authorities that participated in this research attempted to downsize over a couple of years as the ongoing news of funding reductions was received. The uncertainty of external factors beyond the control of the conservation authorities, similar to most public organizations, may suggest that gradual downsizing may be better suited to the private sector. Few employees enjoy working towards a future goal that doesn't include their position or them in a new, better and more senior position.

Contrary to Cameron who suggests long, slow downsizing exercises, Cusipag (in reference to the public service) puts it this way: "When it comes to downsizing, public sectors are prone to little cuts; you come in today for a small operation, then you come back later and do a little bit more. This happens in the public sector because the organizations, including management and the politicians, are unfamiliar with downsizing processes and how to manage them, they may not believe it is necessary and they may not have sufficient information to understand the bigger picture. If an organization is going to downsize, it should do what the private sector

does: target cuts strategically, take the opportunity to restructure and reshape the organization, do it quickly, get it over with”(Cusipag, 1996:30-31). From personal experience this approach allows the victims, survivors and the organization to get on with their lives and their business.

Cameron concludes “It is clear that among the most critical factors leading to successful downsizing is the effective management of the human resource system” (Cameron, 1994:210). All of the literature reviewed agreed with this statement.

Feldman and Leana suggest some specific practices to improve layoffs (Feldman, 1994:239-240). They suggest early notification of terminations, severance pay and the extension of benefits, education and retraining for employees who are terminated, assistance to help terminated employees find new jobs, clear communications about layoffs, and assistance for survivors. Some of these management practices may not work in small public sector organizations because of different internal and external factors. For example, there may be limited time for notification, insufficient funding for education and retraining, or alternative work may not be an option in an office with a small number of employees. The key message is that there are ways to minimize the psychological distress of downsizing, to improve opportunities for new employment, and to show concern for the survivors.

### **Management Options**

An important concept for policy makers and management to consider when downsizing

relates to needs: "Needs are learned and not necessarily inherent, and they do influence behaviour" (Heffron, 1989:244). If this is true and there is sufficient time before the downsizing process starts, then local government agencies may have the opportunity to develop a work environment that will help with staff behaviour during and after downsizing. The new work environment will contain an awareness of downsizing, its significant negative and possibly positive impacts on the organization, as well as the potential for downsizing to occur again.

Schweiger suggests that communications can help employees cope with uncertainty and get through a stressful situation. A lack of communications can cause negative effects that can last and even cause the stress to become worse (Schweiger, 1991:111). This concept is further explained by Schweiger using the Social Justice Theory, which suggests that people will have less dissatisfaction if they understand the process through open communications and perceive that it was fair.

The role of a manager, according to Jacobs (1988:6), is: (1) be sensitive to the impact of downsizing on employees, ie, normal routines cannot be resumed immediately; (2) be flexible and give survivors some control over their own circumstances; (3) improve communications; (4) include transition planning in cooperation with the survivors to alleviate stress; (5) develop a positive work environment; and (6) identify problem areas and address them with sincerity. The survivors need to know they are important.

The Justice Theory Framework as presented by Brockner (et al., 1992:526), suggests some managerial implications. Good organizational caretaking practices should go a long way toward the reduction of negative effects of layoffs on the behaviours and attitudes of survivors. Compensation is the key caretaking attribute. Important as fair compensation itself is the method used by the organization to communicate the news of fair compensation to the survivors. It is the overall perception of fairness in the minds of the survivors that moderates the negative effects of layoffs.

How fairness is measured should be useful information to management. According to Leventhal, Karuza and Fry (Brockner et al., 1994:397), procedures are fair if they: follow consistent procedures; lack self-interest or bias; are based on the accurate information; present opportunities to make corrections; involve input from all stakeholders; and demonstrate high moral and ethical standards. Because different individuals can see the same thing differently it becomes difficult for management, who may do their best to be fair but not communicate in a manner that permits each individual to perceive the fairness. Communication is as important as being fair and the two must go together in a downsizing process to increase the opportunity for survivors to develop an awareness and an informed opinion of the process.

To reduce remorse and guilt it is important for the employer to have clear rules on how the organization decided who was terminated and who was retained. It is equally as important to effectively communicate this information to the survivors. By following these rules,

management may reduce remorse and guilt feelings in survivors. To do otherwise could result in strong inequity feelings and, in turn, higher levels of remorse guilt and legal challenges (Brockner et al., 1986:375).

Merry and Singer (1994:38) note that each organization must develop its own specific approach to resolving and managing downsizing issues because every organization has unique characteristics. It is important that organizations draw from a variety of resources and experiences to determine the best method of addressing the challenge of managing the human dimension of change.

If management provides a variety of transition counselling options and provides the victims with some options, they can potentially reduce litigation, help maintain survivor morale, maintain an organization's public image and ease the conscience of the policy makers (Allen, 1990:83). In essence, management should provide individuals who have been terminated some say in what conditions are contained in their termination agreement. This type of management practice would also contribute to the perception of fairness in the eyes of the survivors, with an overall effect that should be less stressful and produce a good working environment.

#### SURVEY RESULTS AND A COMPARISON WITH THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Details of the survey results are contained in the appendix, tables 1 through 36). The survey results were tabulated based on board vs. staff status and gender to see if there were any noticeable similarities or differences in the responses. The literature was silent on these kinds

of differences. Generally speaking the responses were similar regardless of status or gender. Any inconsistencies will be noted later in this discussion.

Responses from members of the Board of Directors were not as complete as those from staff. Usable responses from Board Members totalled 28%, while usable staff responses totalled 47%. The low response rate from Board members may limit the ability of the data to predict feelings and reactions of policy makers during downsizing processes. The response rate should, however, be sufficient to provide some indication of Board Member's feelings and reactions. The low response rate from Board members may be explained by their attempt to distance themselves from the process or to avoid rethinking the process; or it may result from poor survey design. A survey specifically for Board members may or may not have produced better results.

All of the tables and charts are useful to compare Board Member feelings with those of staff. However, Table 9 is the best overall example. Table 9 outlines the feelings experienced during the downsizing process. No respondent felt hate and very few identified denial, depression and sadness as feelings they experienced. Suspicion, distrust, and guilt were also low (less than 20%) on the list of feelings. The feelings noted most often included anger, fear, anxiety, relief, frustration, and insecurity, feelings which could be considered normal or anticipated based on the literature. Frustration was the highest, 51% of the time, and may relate to the Province's external financial controls on funding and to a lesser extent to the market forces of technological change. The literature was silent on the effect of external factors.

The low incidence of guilt (19%) is different than the feelings anticipated or suggested in the literature review. Brockner's (et al., 1987:526) idea of equity as explained by the Justice Theory may explain this low response. If the survivors perceived that their outcome to input ratio was not greater than those who were terminated they may have lower levels of guilt. In Brockner's terms, there was no positive inequity. The survivors may have perceived this equity and fairness because they were given opportunities to give input and be informed about the downsizing process. This is illustrated in their responses to questions 4 and 5 (tables 1 and 2), and charts 1 and 2. Seventy-four percent of the respondents were given an opportunity to give input into the downsizing process (sometimes, often or always) 94 percent of the respondents were kept informed (sometimes, often, or always) and 89 percent of the respondents considered the method of staff terminations acceptable.

Chart 3 illustrates the comparison of power and feelings. Individuals who were on a committee that made recommendations and decisions about the downsizing process were considered to have power as compared to those who didn't sit on a committee. The feelings of the two groups varied only for sadness and depression. Some of the respondents without power indicated feelings of sadness and depression. The literature doesn't provide an explanation for this difference. The explanation for the difference in these two feelings may be that those on the committee(s) have more specific details about the discussions and the background that went into the decisions about downsizing versus those who were not on a committee.

CHART 1

This chart illustrates the response from Board Members and Staff regarding their perceived opportunity to participate and give input to the downsizing process. Seventy-one percent of the respondents indicated that they felt that they were given an opportunity to participate and give input.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION Question 4

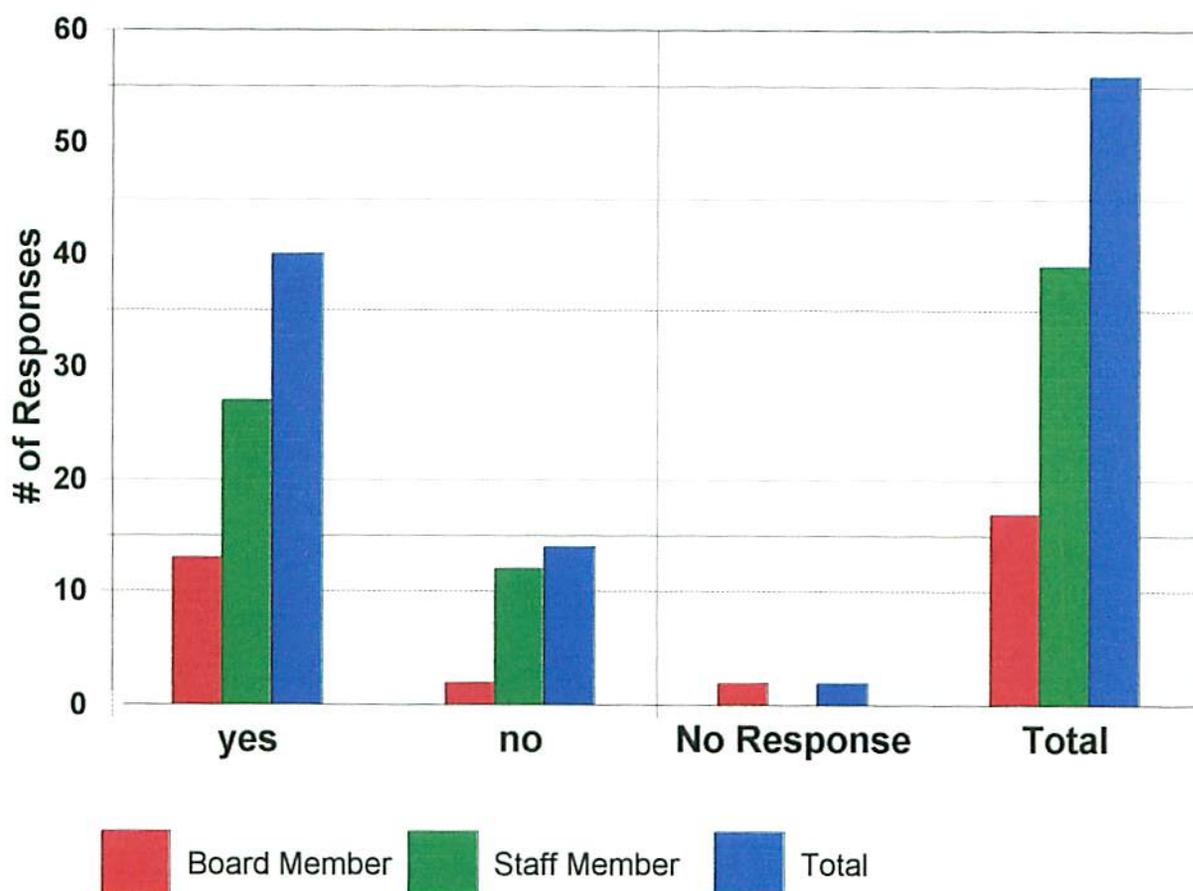


CHART 2

This chart compares the response to question 5 which indicates if the respondents were kept informed or not about the downsizing process with question 12 which indicates the feelings of the respondents. Being informed about the downsizing process didn't seem to have a significant effect on the feelings that the respondents experienced.

## Informed and Feelings Question 5 vs Question 12

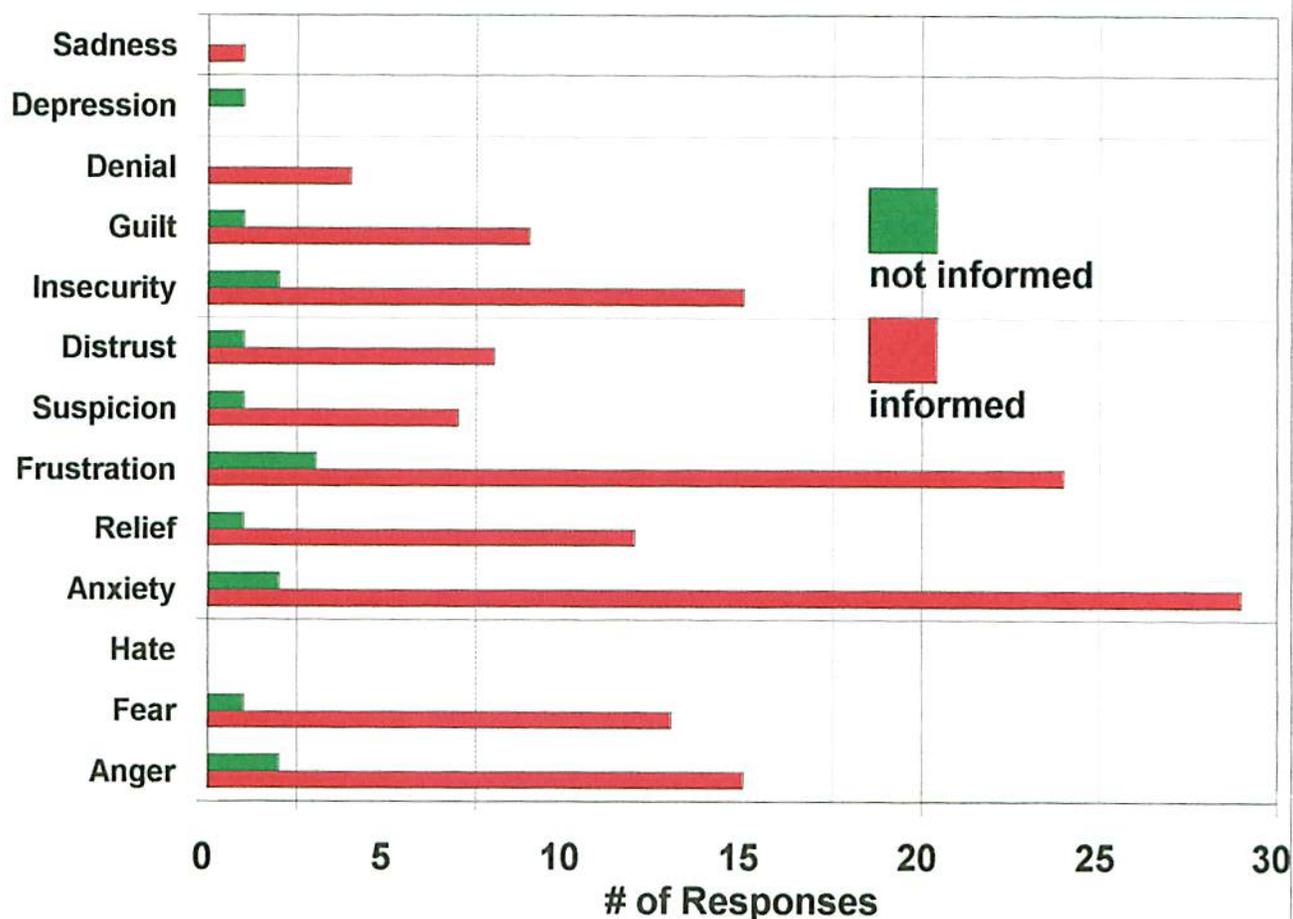
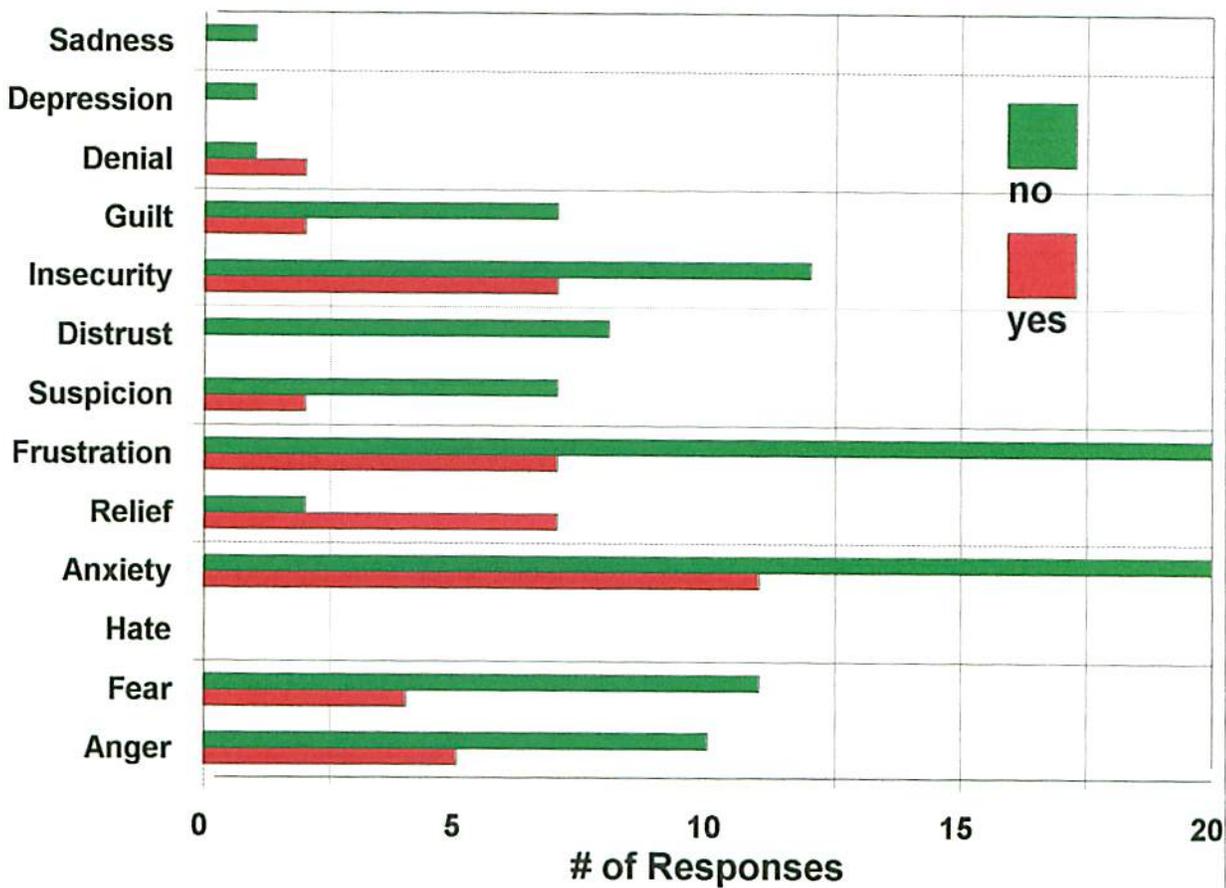


CHART 3

This chart compares the feelings of those individuals who were on a committee that made the recommendations and decisions regarding the downsizing process, those with power, versus those who were not on a committee and hence had no power to influence decisions. Those with power didn't experience sadness or depression; otherwise the feelings were similar.

## Power vs Feelings Question 3 & 12



The respondents observed behavioural changes (Table 11 and 12), in their peers 78 percent of the time and in their supervisors 67 percent of the time. Most of the observed behavioural change occurred before or at the time the layoffs were announced. Behavioural changes included defensiveness, supportiveness, irritableness, motivational, discouraging, inspiring, demanding, distant and fearful. These behavioural changes reflect what the literature suggests as normal or anticipated responses to downsizing. The literature makes very little reference to gender or politician's responses to downsizing; the survey results illustrated no noticeable differences in the responses of Board Members as compared to staff, or in gender responses. The behavioural changes observed most often were somewhat contradictory: "fearful" and "supportive". The literature doesn't provide an explanation for these opposing observations. It is possible that the fear was caused by the respondents' observed changes in their peers and supervisors' behaviour, while at the same time they were receiving support.

The importance and fairness of the severance package are outlined in tables 14 and 15, and illustrated by charts 4 and 5. The respondents ranked the severance package as important or very important, and as fair. Table 43 and chart 5 identify similar results when the responses from those who were terminated and retained were compared to the responses for the importance of the severance package. The responses suggest that the severance package is equally as important to both the victims and the survivors. The Equity Theory supports this notion and also suggests that when victims and survivors perceive fairness and equity they will be able to handle the downsizing process better.

CHART 4

This chart indicates the respondent's opinion about the importance of the severance package that all victims of the downsizing process received. The response indicates that the severance package was important to both genders as well as the policy makers and the staff.

### Severance Pay Question 18:

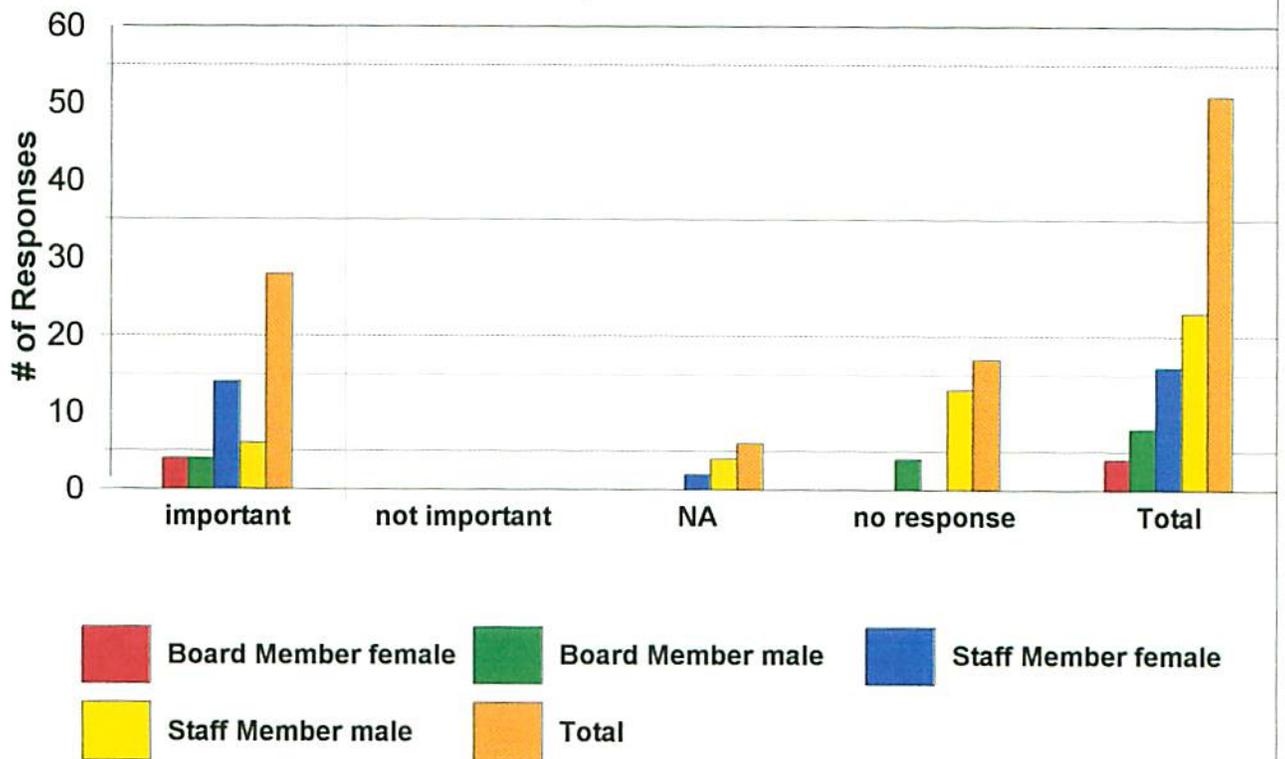
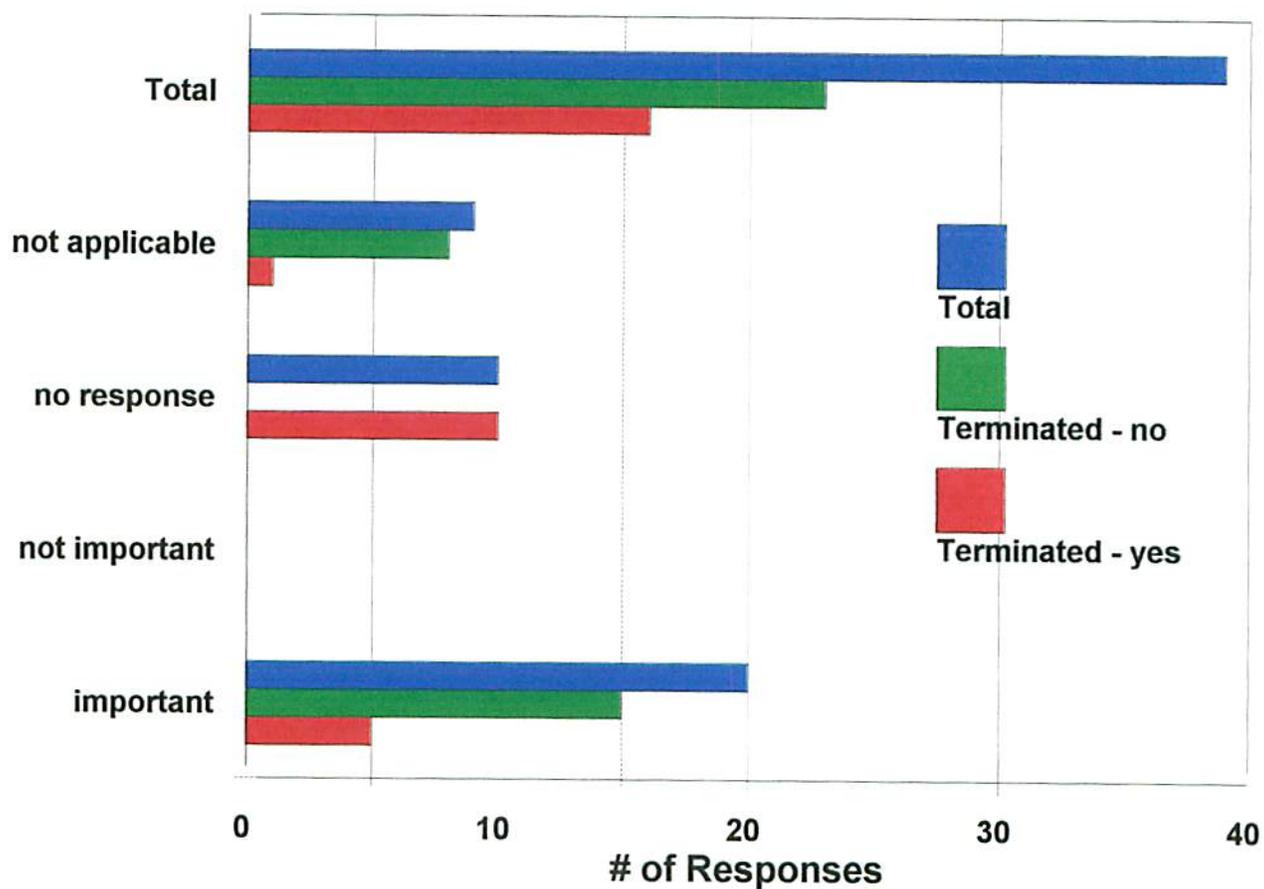


CHART 5

This chart compares the responses to question 2, which noted those staff terminated versus those who were retained, with the responses to question 18 which indicates the importance of the severance package. Victims and survivors both indicated that the severance package was important.

## Termination & Severance Questions 2 vs 18



Negative and positive aspects of downsizing were addressed by questions 19 and 20 and set out in tables 16 through 25. The responses from all participants ranked job loss, loss of services to the public and lost financial status of the employee as the three most negative aspects of downsizing. The responses on positive aspects of downsizing tended to be more evenly split amongst increased efficiency, increased effectiveness, career opportunities, and job diversity. Early retirement and better service to the public received fewer positive responses.. The lower ranking of early retirement may be explained by table 32 which indicates that a majority of the respondents are in the 30 to 50 age range. It is worth noting that responses to the positive aspects of downsizing tended to be on the low side of the positive scale. This may suggest that it was difficult to feel positive about the process.

The response to question 21a regarding knowledge and skills (table 26 and 27), indicates that a majority of the responses indicated that they had some, substantial or all the skills necessary to handle the downsizing process. This response may reflect the exposure to some downsizing over a two year period prior to the larger number of terminations that occurred in early 1996. Maintaining self-esteem was less of a concern to the respondents than job retraining, self confidence, and having the ability to deal with change. The responses to question 21a, having the knowledge and skills to deal with downsizing, compared to question 21b, what knowledge and skills would you prefer, seem somewhat contradictory. Seventy-one percent responded that they had the skills required to handle downsizing and 68 percent indicated that they would have preferred to be trained in a variety of skills such as self-confidence and the ability to deal with change. There may have been a problem with the wording of the questionnaire

or possibly the answers to question 21b were more true to their needs.

Table 30 provides responses about desired changes to the downsizing process. The results are very strongly in favour of the same procedures. These responses support my personal observations that the decisions need to be made quickly. There were conflicting comments in the literature on this point. Cameron suggests that a gradual process is associated with increased performance while Cusipag recommends a faster process to deal with some of the human issues related to the period of unpleasant feelings, the uncertainty related to whose job is next, and allowing the healing process to start sooner. There is a minimum time required between the first rumors and the actual terminations. Politicians and senior management require time to assess the degree of cuts, to decide who and how many need to be terminated, and to review alternative solutions. Staff would be critical of the politicians and senior management if they didn't take some time to assess the degree of downsizing needed. Unfortunately this process can drag on in public sector organizations, relative to the speed of the rumour mill and the anxiety levels of staff.

The survey results suggest that the three Conservation Authorities did a reasonable job of managing their downsizing process. This did not, however, eliminate the negative feelings associated with such a difficult task. This is supported by Merry and Singer (1994:37) who suggest that no one or no group is immune to change-induced anxiety. If no one is immune, then the policy makers may, in fact, have similar feelings to the victims and survivors. This concept is supported by this research.

### POSTSCRIPT

It has been about one year since the survey was conducted and one and one half years since the last and largest downsizing exercise. A quick overview of the three CAs is valuable to this paper because it provides information about the organizations after the downsizing, and some twenty-twenty hind-sight that may provide support for some of the conclusions drawn from the data. The information for this postscript was obtained through discussions with the General Managers and some staff.

Since the downsizing adjustments to permanent staff positions in the CAs has been limited to two. One individual voluntarily left because they didn't agree with the downsizing process and didn't feel comfortable working in the new culture of the organization. This individual has maintained a good communication link with the CA they worked for and has gone on to a new career in which they are much happier. A second individual was unable to cope with the stress of downsizing and the changes which included the merger of duties with another CA. This individual is now pursuing a new career.

The downsizing process occurred on at least two separate occasions, one in 1995 and the second in 1996. As a general comment it appears that the first group of individuals that were terminated have remained bitter towards the organization longer and have not maintained a relationship with the organization. More individuals from the second group that were terminated have maintained a relationship with the organization. This may be explained by the learning process that occurred during the first round of downsizing. Staff of the CAs did not

work in an environment of downsizing and consequently the first round of downsizing would have been more of a shock and it may have provided an opportunity for the survivors to psychologically adjust and become more prepared for the second round of downsizing.

A year and one half after the last downsizing there are three observations or comments of note regarding the survivors. They are starting to feel a sense of stability in the context of not having to go through the turmoil of another round of downsizing. This feeling may be a result of funding stability, a clearer picture of the individual's and the organizations' roles and responsibilities, as well as no further discussions about downsizing. A sense of stability also came from the influx of staff under a Federally funded program; staff were being hired not fired. A second observation of staff and General Managers is that the survivors have gradually adjusted and become more, but not completely, comfortable with the organization's new culture, and with the significant increase in work load. Staff are learning to prioritize in a whole new context; doing the essential and the necessary which includes taking some time away from work to prevent burnout. The dedication of the survivors has been exceptional.

The Board of Directors for the CAs are aware of the changes and turmoil that the organization and the staff have gone through, and are very cooperative with the ongoing changes necessary to clarify their new roles and responsibilities. At the same time, the Board expects performance and results.

As a final postscript note, municipalities in Ontario, as they work through the changes

outlined by the Harris government in January of 1997 "Mega Week", will find it necessary to downsize. Like CAs, a lot of municipalities will not have the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out the process in the most humane way possible. Hopefully they can learn from those around them that have already gone through the process.

### SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS

By no means does this paper raise all of the questions or provide all of the answers. There is a need to continue studying many aspects of downsizing in the public sector. Public sector organizations differ tremendously in size, many are part of what is referred to as the "Greater Public Sector" as compared to those hired directly by the province, rural local government employees tend to be non-unionized, some political representatives are full time and others part-time, some policy makers are elected and others are appointed, and many more differences exist. The public sector is different than private sector in a two significant ways. They have Boards of Directors or politicians who have an obligation to both themselves and the public to be responsible for the taxpayers money and therefore be in charge of and know what is going on. The public also have expectations of government offices that they don't have of the private sector. This may relate to a sense of ownership because they pay taxes. Downsizing in public sector organizations will have differences that need to be considered as part of the process and many of these have yet to be investigated and studied.

Downsizing is foreign to public organizations and until recently the literature dealt mostly with the experiences of the private sector. Downsizing in the public sector, because it is the

public sector and because this is the first major downsizing process in the public sector, may require different management techniques than the private sector.

Some recommendations and ideas for policy makers and practitioners are:

- Contrary to popular belief and practice education and experience don't always produce the best employees (Maas, 1997:3). Employers can find the right people by looking for the right attitude and the right chemistry that fits the culture of the organization. This is also true when attempting to decide what staff to retain in a downsizing exercise.
- Employers need to give employees the right work environment. This includes opportunities and inducements for achievement, growth, recognition, fairness, respect and camaraderie (Maas, 1997:3). In a downsizing exercise the survivors and the victims both have needs of being treated fairly and with respect.
- Training of staff and policy makers is important to an organization's growth, efficiency and effectiveness at any time. The first to be trained about downsizing should be the policy makers and senior management. This training should occur as far ahead of downsizing as possible because it takes time to implement work place changes. In a downsizing process most staff look for some form of support or training. By looking after their needs a public organization will benefit from the attitude and productivity of the survivors, and thus gain the support of the community.
- Employee's feelings and perceptions are reflections of their personal values, attitudes,

and professional behaviour. Managing employee's feelings and perceptions through honest believable communication techniques may help an organization maintain or regain employee motivation and productivity.

- Stay upfront and ahead of the process as much as possible.
- Remember that "people will behave about the way you expect them to," (Evans:1997). The expectations of the policy makers and senior management can quickly spread throughout the organization.
- Provide board members and staff with opportunities for meaningful input. Meaningful means they believe the opportunity is sincere and the organization and senior management are open to some of their suggestions.
- The downsizing process should be as quick as possible. In public sector organizations time is required for policy makers and senior staff to sort out options, develop strategies and give opportunities for input. One way to shorten the downsizing process is to attempt to do it all at once or at least a significant portion of the terminations should be done in a short time period. The biggest mistake would be for the policy makers and senior staff to wait until they could make the necessary changes perfectly free of errors or problems. This day never comes and it may paralyze the organization.
- Intentionally over-downsize; this may sound inhumane and brutal and may not work in every situation. When a public organization has to undertake a major downsizing process it may not realize at the time that on the other side of the process will be a new organization with a new culture and a new way of doing business. Not every

employee will function well in the new organization, especially those who hold on to the old way of doing things. The new organization will also need staff with new skills and new ideas. Over-downsizing is one way the organization can achieve its new state.

- The victims of downsizing who have been treated with respect, in a professional manner and in an equitable manner should be able to get on with their lives with confidence, respect and self-esteem.
- Frequent, believable, and fair communication is vital to social justice in downsizing. It helps unhappy people become less dissatisfied and reduces dysfunctions by knowing that the process has been equitable, (Schweiger, 1991:128).
- A grieving process is necessary for the victims and the survivors. Without this employers' efforts to improve morale, efficiency and effectiveness may not succeed.
- Survivors will experience the stress of the downsizing turmoil, an increase in workload, unclear job responsibilities, unclear organizational directions and decreased productivity caused by these stresses. It is important for policy makers and senior staff to be aware of these normal side effects and help staff through them.
- The severance package was important to the policy makers, survivors and victims of the process. In a downsizing process staff are terminated through no fault of their own. Therefore, a severance package may provide a sense of fairness to the stakeholders.
- Knowing and recognizing what are considered normal feelings and behaviour during and after a downsizing process is a vital skill for senior managers. Knowing how to

handle these feelings and behavioural changes is equally as important. Well trained managers can help the survivors and the organization through the process.

- Catching their breath; survivors will need an opportunity to stop, reflect and catch their breath. This need may occur at different times in different organizations but it is vitally important to the overall efficiency of the organization to recognize the symptoms and give staff a need break from their day to day pace ie. increased work load, constant change, unclear directions, and job security.
- It is important for the organization, senior management and individual staff to spend time on those things that can be changed, the things the organization has control over.

These are a few management techniques that have been learned from the reality of a downsizing process and the opportunity to prepare this report. This list is by no means exhaustive

Generally the feelings of the staff, as expressed through the questionnaires, conformed to what the literature suggest as likely responses to a downsizing process. Although there is no one set of rules or management practices that will work for all agencies, the first consideration in downsizing techniques is to have good human resource management practices in place long before the downsizing process is to occur: get to know your organization, and recognize that its most valuable resource is its people. It is my opinion that the efficiency and productivity of an organization will look after itself if the organization looks after the victims, survivors and policy makers.

## APPENDICES

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3 July, 1996

**RESEARCH STUDY**

Dear Participant

**Re: HUMANIZING THE DOWNSIZING PROCESS**

**"YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY OF ORGANIZATIONS TO MAKE DOWNSIZING PROCESSES BETTER FOR THOSE MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED"**

This survey forms the basis of a major research report for a Masters Degree in Public Administration (MPA). The information thus derived will become part of the MPA Library at the University of Western Ontario.

Participation in the study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to complete the questionnaire, I thank you. All questionnaires will be kept confidential. No other person will know how you responded to these questions. When the research is completed the questionnaires will be destroyed.

This questionnaire is designed to collect **perceptions, feelings and experiences of staff and board members who have been through a downsizing exercise.** It will take **approximately 20 minutes to complete.** The information gained will increase our knowledge about downsizing and help public agencies understand how to improve the process.

When completed, the questionnaire can be placed in the envelope provided and returned to the designated contact for your organization. All questionnaires, completed or not, should be returned no later than **August 20, 1996.**

Enclosed is a consent form which is required under university guidelines for ethical research. To maintain anonymity, the consent form should not be attached to the questionnaire. If you have any questions you can contact Tom Prout at 235-2610 (w) or 235-0389 (h), or the faculty advisor for the project, Carol Agócs, at 679-2111, ext.4937.

I thank you for your assistance and input.

Sincerely

Tom Prout P.Ag.  
Candidate for MPA

**RESEARCH STUDY CONSENT FORM**

**HUMANIZING THE DOWNSIZING PROCESS**

---

**I HAVE READ THE LETTER OF INFORMATION AND UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE STUDY. I HEREBY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE. I ACKNOWLEDGE THE RIGHT TO ANSWER ONLY THE QUESTIONS THAT APPLY TO MY SITUATION AND/OR TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, OR TO LEAVE ANY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED.**

---

**signature**

---

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**RESEARCH STUDY SUMMARY ORDER FORM**

**HUMANIZING THE DOWNSIZING PROCESS**

---

**For a summary of the results of this survey add your mailing address. Please print.**

**Name**

---

**Address**

---

HUMANIZING THE DOWNSIZING SURVEY

1. Are you a board member  or a staff member ?
2. As a staff member, was your position terminated as part of the downsizing process?  
yes  no  redeployment
3. Were you on the committee that made recommendations or decisions about the downsizing process? yes  no
4. Were you given an opportunity to participate/give input to the downsizing process?  
always  often  sometimes  seldom  never   
explain: (use back of page if more space is required)
- 
5. Were you kept informed about the downsizing process?  
always  often  sometimes  seldom  never
6. What method was used to notify staff about termination?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Was the method of notifying staff about terminations acceptable?  
yes  no  explain acceptability/non-acceptability:  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Did you have trouble accepting downsizing as a reality: as an individual? yes  no   
of the organization? yes  no   
explain: (use back of page if more space is required)  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. At what time in the process did you accept downsizing as a reality?  
before announcement: \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
at the time of the announcement: \_\_\_\_\_  
after announcement: \_\_\_\_\_ weeks  
not yet \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who helped you cope with the downsizing process?  
family  friends  neighbours  strangers  peers  supervisors   
consultants  (indicate type) other  (list)

11. What helped you cope with the downsizing process?

- work  talking about it  reading about it  exercise   
 outplacement  severance package  other  (list)

12. Which of the following feelings did you experience during the downsizing process?  
 (check any that apply)

- anger  fear  hate  anxiety  relief  frustration   
 suspicion  distrust  insecurity  guilt  denial

13. At what time in the downsizing process did you experience these feelings?  
 (check any that apply)

time frame (months before/after the announcement of staff lay offs)

	5+	4	3	2	1	announcement	1	2	3	4	5+
anger											
fear											
hate											
anxiety											
relief											
frustration											
suspicion											
distrust											
insecurity											
guilt											
denial											

14. Did you notice any behaviour changes in your peers, [yes  no  ] or your supervisor, [yes  no  ] during the downsizing process?

At what point in the process did their behaviour change?

	peers	supervisor
before announcement (number of months)	_____	_____
at the time of the announcement	_____	_____
after announcement (number of months)	_____	_____

15. Were the behaviour changes: (check any that apply)

	peer	supervisor
defensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
irritable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
motivating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
discouraging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
inspiring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
demanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
distant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
fearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
abusive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other _____		

16. Was there a financial severance package?      yes  no

17. Did you consider the financial severance package fair?    yes  no  not applicable

explain: (use back of page if more space is required)

18. How important was the severance package?

very important  important  somewhat important   
 not important  not applicable

explain: (use back of page if more space is required)

19. In your opinion, rank these negative aspects of downsizing:

(1 meaning least negative and 5 meaning the most negative)

	1	2	3	4	5
your job loss					
loss of services to the public					
your lost financial status					
embarrassment to you					
lost social interaction					
lost professional interaction					
other <input type="checkbox"/> (list)					

20. In your opinion, rank these positive aspects of downsizing:

(1 meaning least positive and 5 meaning the most positive)

- increased efficiency
- increased effectiveness
- career opportunities
- more diverse job duties
- a better service to the client
- early retirement
- other (list)

1	2	3	4	5

21. Did you have the knowledge and the skills required to handle the downsizing process?

yes  substantial  some  limited  no

What knowledge and skills would you have preferred to be trained in?

emotional counselling  job retraining  self confidence   
 ability to deal with change  self-esteem  other  List:

22. Did you consider the downsizing process fair?

yes  no

explain: (use back of page if more space is required)

23. In your opinion was the downsizing process handled:

very well  well  average  poorly  very poorly

24. What changes would you suggest to the downsizing process?

	more	same	less
opportunity for input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
information exchange	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
job sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
senior staff salary reductions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
junior staff salary reductions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
staff participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
board member participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
senior staff terminations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
faster decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
slower decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
communications from supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other (list)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
comments: (use back of page if more space is required)			

25. Gender: M  F

26. Age group: 20-30 , 31-40 , 41-50 , 51-60 , 61+

27. Please indicate the number of years of employment with the conservation authority, (for board members indicate the number of years on the board of directors).

0 to 3  3 to 6  7 to 10  10 to 13  13+

28. Level of Education:

up to a high school diploma  college degree  some university  
 university degree  post graduate

29. Comments

If you have any comments about this survey or about the downsizing process please use the following space. The more information you provide the better the research will be.

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS APPRECIATED**

**THANK YOU!**

May 13, 1996

Tom Prout  
R.R. #3  
Exeter, Ont.  
N0M 1S5

Department of Political Science  
Departmental Research Ethics Committee  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ont.

Dear Ladies and/or Gentlemen

**Re: MPA Research Project 931**

My MPA Research Project 931, Humanizing the Downsizing Process, includes a survey of human subjects. Accordingly, I am applying to the Departmental Research Ethics Committee to ensure that the survey conforms to University guidelines. Enclosed you will find parts A and B of the application form as well as the survey.

This survey will be carried out at three different conservation authorities and will include staff and board members. There are no exclusive interviews with anyone and the survey does not contain tricks or concealed/hidden agenda's. The information gained will be stored on 3½ inch floppy discs at my place of residence. The survey and the results of the survey will not be harmful to the participants, the conservation authorities or anyone at The University of Western Ontario. In fact it is hoped that the results will assist agencies and their staff with downsizing exercises.

Respectfully Submitted



Tom Prout P.Ag.  
Candidate MPA

**Department of Political Science  
Review Procedure for Research Involving  
Human Subjects**

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Graduate student research involving human subjects must be reviewed by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee to ensure it conforms to University guidelines. This includes all research which involves interviews or surveys. For the purposes of this review, interviews do not include personal contacts which are designed to find documentary sources or other sources of information of use to the research project. They do include personal contacts which provide data on which the research result will rest.

In order that the committee may assess your research proposal, please complete Part A and the appropriate sections of Part B.

Part A

1. Name: Tom Prout
2. Title of Research Project: HUMANIZING the DOWNSIZING PROCESS
3. Are you seeking external funding for the project? Y  N
4. Will your research design include interviews or surveys, as defined above?  Y N  
If no, briefly describe the method to be used and stop. If yes, proceed to the questions below.
5. Will your research involve statistically based surveys?  Y N  
If yes, see section 1 of Part B.
6. Will your research interviews be exclusively with persons who have held significant public positions and who are sharing their reminiscences, views etc. with you? Y  N  
If yes, see section 2 of Part B.
7. Will you ensure the cooperation of interviewees is voluntary?  Y N
8. How will you store the data or information gained?  
on 3 1/2" floppy discs at my residence

... over

1. If you are using statistically based surveys, you must attach a copy of your survey instrument and the covering letter you intend to use. In that letter you must state what the purpose of your research is; how long it will take to complete the questionnaire; that participation will be voluntary; what the disposition of the data collected will be; and how the data will be used.

You must also inform the committee of any potential harmful effects of the research and/or your findings on respondents. In such cases, state what you plan to do to minimize those effects. *NONE*

If you are using tricks, or are concealing the purpose of your research from the potential respondents, you must inform the committee of your reasons and explain how you will redress the subterfuge later. *NONE*

If the survey is to involve personal contact, *NO* or if it is to delve into personal matters, *YES*, a consent form must be completed by the interviewee and held by the researcher.

2. *N/A* If you are interviewing persons who have held public positions and the interviews are designed to gather their memories and perceptions, the committee requires copies of two draft letters. The first is to be supplied to the interviewee before, or when, you request the interview. It must state the purpose of your research, what you wish to discuss with the person in broad terms, how long the interview may take and what you plan to do with the information provided.

*N/A* The second letter will confirm the meeting (hopefully thanking the interviewee), state what you plan to do with the material and confirm any special arrangements over rights of prior review which were agreed to at the interview.

3. *✓* For more details, see University Guidelines for the Review Board for Non Medical Research Involving Human Subjects.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

1996 RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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NOTE: Please comment and return to Catharine Wynne.

ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Student's Name: Tom Prout  
Research Project: Humanizing the Downsizing Process  
Date: May 16, 1996  
Advisor: Carol Agocs

COMMITTEE

COMMENTS

M. Lusztig APPROVED  NOT APPROVED

A.K. McDougall APPROVED  NOT APPROVED

*Will do - the answer to Q 6 should be yes if it is an interview with employees about their job experience and not their private life.*

J. McDougall APPROVED  NOT APPROVED

*I ASSUME THE STUDENT IS BASING HIS ANSWER TO QUESTION 6 ON THE FACT THAT HE IS USING A QUESTIONNAIRE, NOT AN INTERVIEW*

V. Schild APPROVED  NOT APPROVED

## GLOSSARY

This glossary is designed to provide the reader with definitions for some of the terms used in this report. These definitions may or may not conform exactly to the definitions used by other practitioners and academics.

<b>Attrition</b>	The natural departure of employees from organizations through quits, retirements, and deaths.
<b>Behavioural Science</b>	A phrase for the various disciplines that study human behaviour, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, social economics, political science, linguistics, and education.
<b>Burnout</b>	More severe stage of distress, manifesting itself in depression, frustration, and loss of productivity.
<b>Career Development</b>	Activities directed at helping people to attain career objectives. These may include skill training, performance feedback, coaching, job rotation, mentoring, and challenging job assignments.
<b>Career Plateau</b>	Situation in which for either organizational or personal reasons the probability of moving up the career ladder is low.
<b>Coaching</b>	A new paradigm for management based on giving organization members committed support, feedback, new views of work, new visions of the organization and new ways of relating to supervisors.
<b>Corporate Culture</b>	This is the pattern of values, beliefs and expectations shared by organization members. It represents the taken-for-granted and shared assumptions that people make about how work is to be done and evaluated and how employees relate to one another and to stakeholders such as suppliers, clients, other organizations and agencies.
<b>Dysfunctional</b>	Those aspects of systems that work against the goals of the organization. The term is meant to be objective but is often used subjectively to refer to the bad parts of systems.
<b>Ethics</b>	Standards of acceptable behaviour for employee relationships with other organization members. The standards may vary depending on the class or professional level of groups of employees.

<b>Feedback</b>	Information regarding the actual performance or the results of activities of a program. It is designed to be helpful information between employees and supervisors.
<b>Human Resources Planning</b>	The process of anticipating and making provision for the movement of people into, within and out of an organization.
<b>Internal Environment</b>	The environment that exists within an organization.
<b>Intrapreneurs</b>	Employees who remain in the organization but are given freedom to create new products, services, and/or production methods.
<b>Job Enrichment</b>	A way of making jobs more satisfying by increasing the skill variety, task identity, significance of the task, autonomy, and feedback.
<b>Job Enlargement</b>	Any effort that makes work more rewarding or satisfying by adding more meaningful tasks and duties to a job.
<b>Job</b>	A group of related activities and duties.
<b>Mentors</b>	Executives who coach, advise, and encourage individuals of lesser rank.
<b>Motivation</b>	The conditions responsible for variation in the intensity, quality and direction of ongoing behaviour.
<b>Need</b>	A central concept in psychology, referring to a biological or psychological requirement for the maintenance and growth of the human animal. It is used among practitioners chiefly to refer to a psychological demand not met in organizational life, with the emphasis on the search for ways in which more such wants can be satisfied.
<b>Norms</b>	Rules regulating behaviour in any social system. They are usually unwritten and are more specific and pointed than values in that deviations from norms are followed by such punishments as kidding, silent disapproval, or in the extreme, banishment.
<b>On-the-Job Training</b>	Method by which employees are given hands-on experience with instructions from their supervisor or other trainer.

<b>Organization Development</b>	A systemwide effort applying behavioural science knowledge to the planned creation and reinforcement of organizational strategies, structure, and processes for improving an organization's effectiveness.
<b>Outplacement Services</b>	The provision of services such as stress and career counselling, financial advice, and assistance in finding another job to a terminated employee.
<b>Outsourcing</b>	Practice of contracting with outside vendors to handle specified HR functions.
<b>Participative Management</b>	A system of management that enables employees to participate in decisions relating to their work and employment conditions, thereby creating a psychological partnership between management and employees.
<b>Position</b>	The different duties performed by, and responsibilities associated with, a single employee.
<b>Power</b>	The ability to influence others so that one's values are satisfied. It may derive from several sources, including organizational position, expertise, access to important resources, and ability to reward and punish others.
<b>Quality of Work Life</b>	The extent to which work is rewarding and free of anxieties and stresses.
<b>Quality (outcome)</b>	Meeting and exceeding customer need for both internal and external customers.
<b>Quality (process)</b>	The continuing commitment by everyone in the organization to understand, meet, and exceed the needs of its customers.
<b>Role</b>	A set of systematically interrelated and observable behaviours that belong to an identifiable job or position. Role behaviour may be either required or discretionary.
<b>Role ambiguity</b>	A result of a conflict between managerial or individual expectations and managerial or individual experience with regard to performance of the role.

<b>Severance Pay</b>	A lump-sum payment given to terminated employees.
<b>Skill training</b>	Training that is more concerned with improving effectiveness on the job than with abstract learning concepts.
<b>Stakeholder</b>	A person or group having a vested interest in the organization's functioning and objectives.
<b>Stress Management</b>	Activities aimed at coping with the dysfunctional consequences of work-related stress. These generally include diagnosing the causes and symptoms of stress and taking action to alleviate the causes and to improve one's ability to deal with stress.
<b>Trust Level</b>	The degree of mutual trust among a set of persons. Raising the trust level is usually a major goal of team building.
<b>Values</b>	Relatively permanent ideals (or ideas) that influence and shape the general nature of people's behaviour.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Lynda Hill, Mainstream Access Corp., 4 Robert Speck Parkway, #350, Mississauga, ON L4Z 1S1, Career and Organizational Consultants.

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## SURVEY RESULTS

### Survey Participant Profile

- # of surveys delivered - ABCA	25	(20%)	(Board of Directors 14, Staff Members 11)
- SVCA	25	(20%)	(Board of Directors 14, Staff Members 11)
- UTRCA	76	(60%)	( Board of Directors 15, Staff Members 61)
Total	126	(100%)	( Board of Directors 43, Staff Members 83)
- # of surveys returned - ABCA	17	30%	(Board of Directors 9, Staff Members 8)
- SVCA	6	11%	(Board of Directors 0, Staff Members 6)
- UTRCA	33	59%	(Board of Directors 8, Staff Members 25)
Total	56	100%	(Board of Directors 17, Staff Members 39)

- surveys returned as a percentage of all those surveyed = 45%.

#### - Board of Directors

- # surveyed 43,
- # responses 17 (4 females, 8 males, and 5 no gender response)
- response rate 40%

#### - Staff Members

- surveyed 83
- responses 39 (16 females, 23 males,
- response rate 47%

### Question 2

“As a staff member, was your position terminated as part of the downsizing process?”

- female staff terminated = 3, 43% of those who responded and were terminated were female.
- male staff terminated = 4, 57% of those who responded and were terminated were male.
- Of the staff who responded to the survey 7 or 18% had been terminated.

**Question 3**

“Were you on the committee that made recommendations or decisions about the downsizing process.”

- Board of Directors	male	4
	female	3
- Staff Members	male	5
	female	<u>4</u>
- Total		16

29% of all the respondents were on the committee that made recommendations or decisions about the downsizing process.

**Question 4**

“Were you given an opportunity to participate/give input to the downsizing process?”

TABLE 1

	yes	no	No Response	Total
Board Member	13	2	2	17
Staff Member	27	12	0	39
Total	40	14	2	56

	yes	no	no response	Total
Board Members	76%	12%	12%	100%
Staff Members	69%	31%	0%	100%
Total	71%	25%	4%	100%

Seventy-one % of all respondents considered that they were given opportunity to participate and give input into the downsizing process.

**Question 5**

“Were you kept informed about the downsizing process?”

TABLE 2

	yes	no	No Response	Total
Board Member	15	1	1	17
Staff Member	36	3	0	39
Total	51	4	1	56

table 2 cont'd	yes	no	no response	Total
Board Members	88%	6%	6%	100%
Staff Members	92%	8%	0%	100%
Total	91%	7%	2%	100%

Ninety-one % of all respondents felt they were kept informed about the downsizing process.

#### Question 6

“What method was used to notify staff about termination?”

TABLE 3

	Letter from General Manager	Verbal from Supervisor	Verbal from General Manager	No Response	Total
Board Member	1	5	4	7	17
Staff Member	16	14	9	0	39
Total	17	19	13	7	56

	Letter from General Manager	Verbal from Supervisor	Verbal from General Manager	No Response	Total
Board Members	6%	29%	24%	41%	100%
Staff Member	41%	36%	23%	0%	100%
Total	30%	34%	23%	13%	100%

Perception vs reality, all staff were notified in the same manner but the answers to this question reflect perception. It is very difficult for management to communicate and inform staff and board members in a manner that is accepted by the survivors, victims and board members.

**Question 7**

“Was the method of notifying staff about terminations acceptable?”

TABLE 4

	yes	no	no response	Total
Board Members	11	1	5	17
Staff Members	33	4	2	39
Total	44	5	7	56

	yes	no	no response	Total
Board Members	65%	6%	29%	100%
Staff Members	85%	10%	5%	100%
Total	79%	9%	13%	100%

Despite the different perceptions noted in question 6 above 79% of the respondents considered the method of notification acceptable.

**Question 8**

“Did you have trouble accepting downsizing as a reality?”

“Did you have trouble accepting downsizing of the Organization?”

TABLE 5

		Board Member	Staff Member	Total
individual	yes	4	15	19
	no	7	22	28
No Response		6	2	4
Total		17	39	56
organization	yes	3	10	12
	no	6	24	30
No Response		8	5	9
Total		17	39	56

table 5 cont'd		Board Member	Staff Member	Total
individual	yes	21%	79%	100%
	no	24%	76%	100%
No Response		75%	25%	100%
Total		30%	70%	100%
organization	yes	23%	77%	100%
	no	20%	80%	100%
No Response		62%	38%	100%
Total		30%	70%	100%

		Board Member	Staff Member	Total
individual	yes	24%	38%	34%
	no	41%	56%	52%
No Response		35%	5%	14%
Total		100%	100%	100%
organization	yes	18%	26%	23%
	no	35%	62%	54%
No Response		47%	13%	23%
Total		100%	100%	100%

### Question 9

"At what time in the process did you accept downsizing as a reality?"

TABLE 6

	Board Member	Staff Member	Range in weeks	Total
before the announcement	4		1-4	28
	3		5-52	
		7	1-4	
		14	5-52	
at the time of the announcement	3	13		16
after the announcement	1			5
		3	1-2	
		1	3-4	
not yet	0	1		1
no response	6	0	0	6

table 6 cont'd	Board Member	Staff Member	Range in	Total	Total
before the announcement	14%		1-4	50%	100%
	11%		4-52		
		25%	1-4		
		50%	4-52		
at the time of the announcement	19%	81%		29%	100%
after the announcement	20%			9%	100%
		60%	1-2		
		20%	3-4		
not yet	0%	100%		2%	100%
no response	100%	0%		10%	100%
Total 100%					

Fifty % of the respondents accepted downsizing as a reality before the announcement of which staff would be terminated.

#### Question 10

"Who helped you cope with the downsizing process?"

TABLE 7

	Board Member	Staff Member	no response	Total
family	0	27	29	56
friends	0	20	36	56
neighbours	0	0	56	56
strangers	0	2	54	56
peers	1	18	37	56
supervisors	1	11	44	56
consultants	1	0	55	56

table 7 cont'd	Board Member	Staff Member	No Response	Total
family	0%	48%	52%	100%
friends	0%	36%	64%	100%
neighbours	0%	0%	100%	100%
strangers	0%	4%	96%	100%
peers	2%	32%	66%	100%
supervisors	2%	20%	79%	100%
consultants	2%	0%	98%	100%

	Board Member	Staff Member	No Response	Total
family	0%	35%	9%	14%
friends	0%	26%	12%	14%
neighbours	0%	0%	18%	14%
strangers	0%	3%	17%	14%
peers	33%	23%	12%	14%
supervisors	33%	14%	14%	14%
consultants	33%	0%	18%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Although a large percentage of the respondents didn't answer this question those that did favoured family and friends first and peers and supervisors to help them cope with downsizing.

#### Question 11

"What helped you cope with the downsizing process?"

TABLE 8

	Board Member	Staff Member	no response	Total
work	0	15	41	56
talking about it	1	34	21	56
reading about it	0	4	52	56
exercise	0	8	48	56
outplacement	0	4	52	56
severance pkge	1	6	49	56
Total	2	71	265	336

table 8 cont'd	Board Member	Staff Member male	no response	Total
work	0%	27%	73%	100%
talking about it	2%	61%	38%	100%
reading about it	0%	7%	93%	100%
exercise	0%	14%	86%	100%
outplacement	0%	7%	93%	100%
severance pkge	2%	11%	88%	100%

	Board Member	Staff Member	no response	Total
work	0%	21%	16%	17%
talking about it	50%	48%	8%	17%
reading about it	0%	6%	20%	17%
exercise	0%	11%	19%	17%
outplacement	0%	6%	20%	17%
severance pkge	50%	8%	19%	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>103%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Talking about the downsizing process and working were the most helpful to respondents in coping with downsizing.

#### Question 12

"Which of the following feelings did you experience during the downsizing process?"

TABLE 9

	Board Member	Staff Member	no response	Total
Anger	2	13	41	56
Fear	0	15	41	56
Hate	0	0	56	56
Anxiety	5	26	25	56
Relief	1	13	42	56
Frustration	2	24	30	56
Suspicion	0	8	48	56
Distrust	0	8	48	56
Insecurity	0	17	39	56
Guilt	1	9	46	56
Denial	0	2	54	56
Depression	0	1	55	56
Sadness	1	0	55	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>728</b>

table 9 cont'd	Board Member	Staff Member	no response	Total
Anger	4%	23%	73%	100%
Fear	0%	27%	73%	100%
Hate	0%	0%	100%	100%
Anxiety	9%	46%	45%	100%
Relief	2%	23%	75%	100%
Frustration	4%	43%	54%	100%
Suspicion	0%	14%	86%	100%
Distrust	0%	14%	86%	100%
Insecurity	0%	30%	70%	100%
Guilt	2%	16%	82%	100%
Denial	0%	4%	96%	100%
Depression	0%	2%	98%	100%
Sadness	2%	0%	98%	100%

	Board Member	Staff Member	no response	Total
Anger	17%	10%	7%	8%
Fear	0%	11%	7%	8%
Hate	0%	0%	10%	8%
Anxiety	42%	19%	4%	8%
Relief	8%	10%	7%	8%
Frustration	17%	18%	5%	8%
Suspicion	0%	6%	8%	8%
Distrust	0%	6%	8%	8%
Insecurity	0%	13%	7%	8%
Guilt	8%	7%	8%	8%
Denial	0%	1%	9%	8%
Depression	0%	1%	9%	8%
Sadness	8%	0%	9%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The feeling of guilt is very low compared to what the literature suggests during a downsizing process.

**Question 13**

“At what time in the downsizing process did you experience these feelings?”

Board Member female (Bf), Board Member male (Bm), Staff Member female (Sf), Staff Member male (Sm).

TABLE 10

	Time Frame in Months Before, Announcement (A), or After											
	Before					A	After					
	5	4	3	2	1		1	2	3	4	5	
Anger	Bf		Sm	Sf	Sf	Sf	Sf	Sf				Sf
Fear	Sf	Sm	Sf	Sf	Sf	Sf	Sf					
Hate			Sm	Sf			Sf	Sf				
Anxiety	Sf	Bf	Sm	Sf	Sf	Sf						
Relief					Sm	Sf	Sf	Sf				
Frustration	Bf			Sf	Sf	Sf	Sf	Sf	Sm			
Suspicion	Sf				Sf	Sf						
Distrust	Sf			Sm	Sf	Sm	Sf					
Insecurity	Sm	Sm	Sm	Sm	Sm	Sm	Sm	Sm				
Guilt						Bf	Bf		Sf			
Denial	Sm			Sm		Sm						

It is of interest to note that male staff members experienced the feeling of insecurity while female staff members experienced fear and frustration.

**Question 14**

“Did you notice any behaviour changes in your peers, or your supervisor during the downsizing process?”

“At what point in the process did their behaviour change?”

TABLE 11

	Behavioural Change				At what point relative to the announcement					
	Peers		supervisor		peer			supervisor		
	yes	no	yes	no	before	at the announcement	after	before	at the announcement	after
Board Member	4	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	3	1
Staff Member	36	3	31	4	26	4	1	27	4	1
no response	12		16							
Total	56		56		27	5	2	28	7	2

	Behavioural Change				At what point relative to the announcement					
	Peers		supervisor		peer			supervisor		
	yes	no	yes	no	before	at the announcement	after	before	at the announcement	after
Board Member	7%	2%	7%	2%	4%	20%	50%	4%	43%	50%
Staff Member	64%	5%	55%	7%	96%	80%	50%	96%	57%	50%
no response	21%		29%							
Total	100%		100%		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Seventy-one % of the respondents noticed behavioural changes in their peers and 62% noticed changes in their supervisors behaviour. A majority of the behavioural change was observed before or at the time the terminations were announced.

**Question 15**

"Were the behaviour changes:?"

TABLE 12

	Board Member		Staff Member		Total
	peer	supervisor	peer	supervisor	
defensive	2	1	11	10	24
supportive	1	2	13	15	31
irritable	0	0	11	9	20
motivating	0	1	3	7	11
discouraging	1	1	15	5	22
inspiring	0	0	3	5	8
demanding	0	0	2	6	8
distant	1	0	9	14	24
fearful	2	1	17	8	28
abusive	0	0	0	1	1
total	7	6	84	80	177

	Board Member		Staff Member		Total
	peer	supervisor	peer	supervisor	
defensive	29%	17%	13%	13%	14%
supportive	14%	33%	15%	19%	18%
irritable	0%	0%	13%	11%	11%
motivating	0%	17%	4%	9%	6%
discouraging	14%	17%	18%	6%	12%
inspiring	0%	0%	4%	6%	5%
demanding	0%	0%	2%	8%	5%
distant	14%	0%	11%	18%	14%
fearful	29%	17%	20%	10%	16%
abusive	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The behavioural changes were varied. Fortunately, only one respondent noted that their supervisor was abusive.

**Question 16****“Was there a financial severance package?”****TABLE 13**

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	9	34	43
no	0	2	2
No Response	8	3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	21%	79%	100%
no	0%	100%	100%
No Response	73%	27%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>100%</b>

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	53%	87%	77%
no	0%	5%	4%
No Response	47%	8%	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

All staff received a severance package. This information was successfully communicated to 77% of the respondents.

**Question 17****“Did you consider the financial severance package fair?”****TABLE 14**

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	7	17	24
no	0	1	1
not applicable	1	13	14
No Response	9	8	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	29%	71%	100%
no	0%	100%	100%
not applicable	7%	93%	100%
No Response	53%	47%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 14 cont'd

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	41%	44%	43%
no	0%	3%	2%
not applicable	6%	33%	25%
No Response	53%	21%	30%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Of those who responded yes or no, 96% considered the severance package fair.

**Question 18**

“How important was the severance package?”

TABLE 15

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
very important	6	16	22
important	2	4	6
somewhat important	0	0	0
not important	0	0	0
not applicable	0	6	6
No Response	9	13	22
Total	17	39	56

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
very important	27%	73%	100%
important	33%	67%	100%
somewhat important	0%	0%	0%
not important	0%	0%	0%
not applicable	0%	100%	100%
No Response	41%	59%	100%
Total	30%	70%	100%

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
very important	35%	41%	39%
important	12%	10%	11%
somewhat important	0%	0%	0%
not important	0%	0%	0%
not applicable	0%	15%	11%
No Response	53%	33%	39%
Total	100%	100%	100%

The severance package was important according to the results illustrated in Table 15.

**Question 19**

“In your opinion, rank these negative aspects of downsizing:” - (This table includes all responses.)

“(1 meaning least negative and 5 meaning the most negative)”

TABLE 16

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
Job loss	3	0	5	6	18	32
loss of services to the public	1	1	6	13	21	42
lost financial status	5	1	5	7	16	34
personal embarrassment	16	8	7	1	2	34
lost social interaction	8	8	6	6	3	31
lost professional interaction	6	1	7	10	6	30

Aspect	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
Job loss	9%	0%	16%	19%	56%	100%
loss of services to the public	2%	2%	14%	31%	50%	100%
lost financial status	15%	3%	15%	21%	47%	100%
personal embarrassment	47%	24%	21%	3%	6%	100%
lost social interaction	26%	26%	19%	19%	10%	100%
lost professional interaction	20%	3%	23%	33%	20%	100%

The most negative aspects of downsizing are reported as job loss, loss of service to the public and lost financial status.

**Question 19 -(Board Member)**

TABLE 17

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
Job loss	1	0	0	0	0	1
loss of services to the public	0	0	1	2	2	5
lost financial status	1	0	0	0	0	1
personal embarrassment	1	1	1	0	0	3
lost social interaction	0	0	1	0	0	1
lost professional interaction	0	0	0	1	0	1

Question 19 -(Board Member) Table 17 cont'd

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
Job loss	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
loss of services to the public	0%	0%	20%	40%	40%	100%
lost financial status	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
personal embarrassment	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%	100%
lost social interaction	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%
lost professional interaction	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%

Staff Member

TABLE 18

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
Job loss	2	0	5	6	18	31
loss of services to the public	1	1	5	11	19	37
lost financial status	4	1	5	7	16	33
personal embarrassment	15	7	6	1	2	31
lost social interaction	8	8	5	6	3	30
lost professional interaction	6	1	7	9	6	29

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
Job loss	6%	0%	16%	19%	58%	100%
loss of services to the public	3%	3%	14%	30%	51%	100%
lost financial status	12%	3%	15%	21%	48%	100%
personal embarrassment	48%	23%	19%	3%	6%	100%
lost social interaction	27%	27%	17%	20%	10%	100%
lost professional interaction	21%	3%	24%	31%	21%	100%

Question 20

"In your opinion, rank these positive aspects of downsizing:" - (This table includes all responses)

"(1 meaning least positive and 5 meaning the most positive)"

TABLE 19

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
increased efficiency	9	8	15	4	4	40
increased effectiveness	10	12	9	1	3	35
career opportunities	10	5	10	6	1	32
more diverse job duties	6	5	15	6	1	33
a better service to the client	14	13	3	1	2	33
early retirement	8	3	7	3	4	25

Table 19 cont'd

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
increased efficiency	23%	20%	38%	10%	10%	100%
increased effectiveness	29%	34%	26%	3%	9%	100%
career opportunities	31%	16%	31%	19%	3%	100%
more diverse job duties	18%	15%	45%	18%	3%	100%
a better service to the client	42%	39%	9%	3%	6%	100%
early retirement	32%	12%	28%	12%	16%	100%

The respondents have indicated that the most positive aspects of downsizing are increased efficiency and more diverse job opportunities.

### Question 20 (Board Member)

TABLE 20

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
increased efficiency	0	1	3	0	0	4
increased effectiveness	1	1	2	0	0	4
career opportunities	2	0	0	1	0	3
more diverse job duties	0	1	2	0	0	3
a better service to the client	1	2	0	0	0	3
early retirement	1	0	0	1	0	2

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
increased efficiency	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%	100%
increased effectiveness	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%	100%
career opportunities	67%	0%	0%	33%	0%	100%
more diverse job duties	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	100%
a better service to the client	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	100%
early retirement	50%	0%	0%	50%	0%	100%

### Question 20 (Staff Member)

TABLE 21

	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
increased efficiency	9	7	12	4	4	36
increased effectiveness	9	11	7	1	3	31
career opportunities	9	5	10	4	1	29
more diverse job duties	6	4	13	6	1	30
a better service to the	13	11	3	1	2	30
early retirement	7	3	7	2	4	23

Staff Member

TABLE 21	rank #1	rank #2	rank #3	rank#4	rank #5	Total
increased efficiency	25%	19%	33%	11%	11%	100%
increased effectiveness	29%	35%	23%	3%	10%	100%
career opportunities	31%	17%	34%	14%	3%	100%
more diverse job duties	20%	13%	43%	20%	3%	100%
a better service to the client	43%	37%	10%	3%	7%	100%
early retirement	30%	13%	30%	9%	17%	100%

Question 21A

“Did you have the knowledge and the skills required to handle the downsizing process?”

TABLE 22

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	2	6	8
substantial	0	10	10
some	2	15	17
limited	0	5	5
no	0	2	2
No Response	13	1	14
Total	17	39	56

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	12%	15%	14%
substantial	0%	26%	18%
some	12%	38%	30%
limited	0%	13%	9%
no	0%	5%	4%
No Response	76%	3%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	25%	75%	100%
substantial	0%	100%	100%
some	12%	88%	100%
limited	0%	100%	100%
no	0%	100%	100%
No Response	93%	7%	100%
Total	30%	70%	100%

**Question 21b**

“What knowledge and skill would you have preferred to be trained in?”

**TABLE 23**

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
emotional counselling	0	5	5
job retraining	0	13	13
self confidence	0	11	11
ability to deal with change	0	10	10
self-esteem	0	4	4

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
emotional counselling	0%	12%	12%
job retraining	0%	30%	30%
self confidence	0%	26%	26%
ability to deal with change	0%	23%	23%
self-esteem	0%	9%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Both survivors and victims indicated a preference for some training.

**Question 22**

“Did you consider the downsizing process fair?”

**TABLE 24**

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	11	24	35
no	0	11	11
no response	6	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	31%	69%	100%
no	0%	100%	100%
no response	60%	40%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>100%</b>

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
yes	65%	62%	63%
no	0%	28%	20%
no response	35%	10%	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Question 23****"In your opinion was the downsizing process handled:"****TABLE 25**

	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Staff Member</b>	<b>Total</b>
very well	4	3	7
well	5	20	25
average	2	13	15
poorly	0	1	1
very poorly	0	0	0
no response	6	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>

	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Staff Member</b>	<b>Total</b>
very well	57%	43%	100%
well	20%	80%	100%
average	13%	87%	100%
poorly	0%	100%	100%
very poorly	0%	0%	0%
no response	75%	25%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>100%</b>

	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Staff Member</b>	<b>Total</b>
very well	24%	8%	13%
well	29%	51%	45%
average	12%	33%	27%
poorly	0%	3%	2%
very poorly	0%	0%	0%
no response	35%	5%	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Question 24****“What changes would you suggest to the downsizing process?”****TABLE 26**

	Board Member			Staff Member			Totals		
	more	same	less	more	same	less	more	same	less
opportunity for input	2	3	0	16	21	0	18	24	0
information exchange	3	3	0	16	12	0	19	15	0
job sharing	3	2	1	14	17	1	17	19	2
senior staff salary reductions	1	4	1	15	16	2	16	20	3
junior staff salary reductions	0	5	1	2	20	7	2	25	8
staff participation	2	4	0	15	20	0	17	24	0
board member participation	3	4	0	3	8	2	8	26	5
senior staff terminations	1	5	0	5	27	0	6	32	0
faster decisions	1	5	0	10	19	3	11	24	3
slower decisions	0	5	1	4	16	10	4	21	11
communications from supervisor	1	4	0	11	20	0	12	24	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>32</b>

table 26 cont'd Changes desired by respondents	Board Member			Staff Member			Totals		
	more	same	less	more	same	less	more	same	less
opportunity for input	12%	7%	0%	14%	11%	0%	14%	9%	0%
information exchange	18%	7%	0%	14%	6%	0%	15%	6%	0%
job sharing	18%	5%	25%	13%	9%	4%	13%	7%	6%
senior staff salary reductions	6%	9%	25%	14%	8%	8%	12%	8%	9%
junior staff salary reductions	0%	11%	25%	2%	10%	28%	2%	10%	25%
staff participation	12%	9%	0%	14%	10%	0%	13%	9%	0%
board member participation	18%	9%	0%	3%	4%	8%	6%	10%	16%
senior staff terminations	6%	11%	0%	5%	14%	0%	5%	13%	0%
faster decisions	6%	11%	0%	9%	10%	12%	8%	9%	9%
slower decisions	0%	11%	25%	4%	8%	40%	3%	8%	34%
communications from supervisor	6%	9%	0%	10%	10%	0%	9%	9%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Question 25**  
**"Gender"**

TABLE 27

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
female	4	16	20
male	8	23	31
no response	5	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
female	24%	41%	36%
male	47%	59%	55%
no response	29%	0%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Thirty-six % of the respondents were females.

**Question 26**  
**"Age group:"**

TABLE 28

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
20-30 yrs.	0	4	4
31-40 yrs.	2	23	25
41-50 yrs.	3	12	15
51-60 yrs.	2	0	2
60 yrs. +	5	0	5
no response	5	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
20-30 yrs.	0%	10%	7%
31-40 yrs.	12%	59%	45%
41-50 yrs.	18%	31%	27%
51-60 yrs.	12%	0%	4%
60+ yrs.	29%	0%	9%
no response	29%	0%	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Seventy-nine % of all the respondents were less than 51 years old. One hundred % of the staff were less than 51 years old.

**Question 27**

"Please indicate the number of years of employment with the conservation authority, (for board members indicate the number of years on the board of directors)."

TABLE 29

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
0-3 yrs.	4	3	7
3-6 yrs.	1	6	7
7-10 yrs.	3	13	16
10-13 yrs.	0	3	3
13+ yrs.	2	14	16
No Response	7	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>56</b>

table 29 cont'd	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
0-3 yrs.	24%	8%	13%
3-6 yrs.	6%	15%	13%
7-10 yrs.	18%	33%	29%
10-13 yrs.	0%	8%	5%
13+ yrs.	12%	36%	29%
No Response	41%	0%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**Question 28**  
**"Level of Education"**

TABLE 30

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
up to high school	3	9	12
college degree	3	8	11
some university	0	10	10
university degree	3	9	12
post graduate	2	3	5
no response	1	0	1
Total	17	39	56

	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
up to high school	18%	23%	21%
college degree	18%	21%	20%
some university	0%	26%	18%
university degree	18%	23%	21%
post graduate	12%	8%	9%
no response	35%	0%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**Question 5** - "Were you kept informed about the downsizing process?" as it relates to the answers to **Question 12** - "Which of the following feelings did you experience during the downsizing process?"

## a) All respondents

TABLE 31

	informed	% of total	not informed	% of total	Total	Total %
Anger	15	88%	2	12%	17	100%
Fear	13	93%	1	7%	14	100%
Hate	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Anxiety	29	94%	2	6%	31	100%
Relief	12	92%	1	8%	13	100%
Frustration	24	89%	3	11%	27	100%
Suspicion	7	88%	1	13%	8	100%
Distrust	8	89%	1	11%	9	100%
Insecurity	15	88%	2	12%	17	100%
Guilt	9	90%	1	10%	10	100%
Denial	4	100%	0	0%	4	100%
Depression	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%
Sadness	1	100%	0	0	1	100%

## b.)- Board Member

TABLE 32

	informed	% of total	not informed	% of total	total	Total %
Anger	2	100%	0	0%	2	100%
Fear	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Hate	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Anxiety	5	100%	0	0%	5	100%
Relief	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Frustration	2	100%	0	0%	2	100%
Suspicion	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Distrust	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Insecurity	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Guilt	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Denial	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Depression	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Sadness	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%

c.) Staff Member

TABLE 33

	informed	% of total	not informed	% of total	Total	Total %
Anger	11	85%	2	15%	13	100%
Fear	14	93%	1	7%	15	100%
Hate	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Anxiety	24	92%	2	8%	26	100%
Relief	12	92%	1	8%	13	100%
Frustration	21	88%	3	13%	24	100%
Suspicion	7	88%	1	13%	8	100%
Distrust	7	88%	1	13%	8	100%
Insecurity	16	94%	1	6%	17	100%
Guilt	8	89%	1	11%	9	100%
Denial	2	100%	0	0%	2	100%
Depression	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%
Sadness	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

**Question 3** - "Were you on the committee that make recommendations or decisions about the downsizing process?" as it relates to **Question 12** - "Which of the following feelings did you experience during the downsizing process?"

The following chart reflects the responses when the answer to Question 3 was yes.

TABLE 34

	On Committee			Not on Committee		
	Board	Staff	Total	Board	Staff	Total
Anger	2	3	5	0	10	10
Fear	0	4	4	0	11	11
Hate	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anxiety	5	6	11	0	20	20
Relief	0	7	7	0	2	2
Frustration	2	5	7	1	19	20
Suspicion	0	2	2	0	7	7
Distrust	0	0	0	0	8	8
Insecurity	1	6	7	0	12	12
Guilt	0	2	2	0	7	7
Denial	0	2	2	0	1	1
Depression	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sadness	0	0	0	1	0	1

table 34 cont'd	On Committee (7 Board Members; 9 staff)			Not on Committee (10 Board Members; 30 staff)		
	Board Member	Staff Member	Total	Board Member	Staff Member	Total
Anger	29%	33%	31%	0%	33%	25%
Fear	0%	44%	25%	0%	37%	28%
Hate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Anxiety	71%	67%	69%	0%	67%	50%
Relief	0%	78%	44%	0%	7%	5%
Frustration	29%	56%	44%	10%	63%	50%
Suspicion	0%	22%	13%	0%	23%	18%
Distrust	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	20%
Insecurity	14%	67%	44%	0%	40%	30%
Guilt	0%	22%	13%	0%	23%	18%
Denial	0%	22%	13%	0%	3%	3%
Depression	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%
Sadness	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	3%

**Question 22** - "Did you consider the downsizing process fair?" as it relates to the response to **Question 23** - "In your opinion was the downsizing process handled:"

TABLE 35

Participant	Board Member		Staff Member		Total	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
well	11	0	24	12	35	12
poorly	0	0	0	1	0	1
no response	6		2		8	

Even those respondents who considered the downsizing process unfair felt the process was handled well.

**Question 2** - "As a staff member, was your position terminated as part of the downsizing process?" as it relates to **Question 18** - "How important was the severance package?"

TABLE 36

	Staff Member			
	terminated	% relative to the 7 terminated	not termination	% relative to 32 not terminated
very important	3	43%	13	41%
important	2	29%	2	6%
somewhat important	0	0%	0	0%
not important	0	0%	0	0%
not applicable	1	14%	8	25%

A severance package is important to both the victims and the survivors.